00022879

923.542
Cur/Lip/Lor
22879

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from

00022879

H T Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

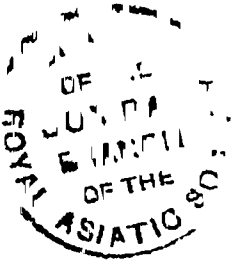
Photo by Elliott & Fry

H.E. THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON (VICEROY OF INDIA)

Frontispiece.

LORD CURZON IN INDIA

1898-1903



BY

H. CALDWELL LIPSETT

AUTHOR OF

"WHERE THE ATLANTIC MEETS THE LAND,"
"A FRONTIER OFFICER," ETC.

22879

With an Appendix containing Lord Curzon's Speech justifying the Delhi Durbar.

London
R. A. EVERETT & CO.
42 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.
1903

[*All rights reserved.*]

923.542
Cur/Lip/Los
22879

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	LORD CURZON'S AIMS	1
II.	RUSSIA, AFGHANISTAN AND PERSIA	12
III.	THE INDEPENDENT TRIBES	29
IV.	THE NEW FRONTIER PROVINCE	45
V.	FAMINE ADMINISTRATION	54
VI.	IRRIGATION AND RAILWAYS	70
VII.	BRITISH RULE IN INDIA	82
VIII.	MISCELLANEOUS REFORMS	
IX.	THE BEST VICEROY SINCE LORD LAWRENCE	109
	APPENDIX — LORD CURZON'S SPEECH ON THE DELHI DURBAR	119

ILLUSTRATIONS

H.E. THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON (VICEROY OF INDIA) *Frontispiece*

PAGE

THE LADY CURZON OF KEDLESTON AND HER CHILDREN, THE HON. MARY IRENE AND THE HON. CYNTHIA BLANCHE . . *facing* 32

MAP OF THE MAHSUD WAZIRI COUNTRY . . 41

WAITING FOR DEATH (a Scene in a Native State) . . . . . *facing* 54

Lord Curzon in India

CHAPTER I

LORD CURZON'S AIMS

LORD CURZON of Kedleston is at once one of the youngest and most successful Viceroys that ever guided the destinies of our Indian Empire. His selection for so high an office at the early age of thirty-nine was a universal surprise. Lord Dalhousie, who assumed the same post at the age of thirty-six, was his only predecessor of fewer years. But Lord Curzon has amply vindicated the claims of youth to be the time of courage and initiative, of high ideals and strenuous performance; and now at the end of the first four out of his five years'

term of office he has won for himself the reputation of an able and conscientious administrator second to none in the Empire.

The great Coronation Durbar at Delhi, which is to be held on January 1st, which the Duke of Connaught attends as the representative of the Royal Family, which has attracted a considerable portion of the English aristocracy to India, and at which Lord Kitchener will hold a review of the Indian army as its Commander-in-Chief, has drawn the eyes of the Empire to India at the present moment, and has thrown a blaze of light on the good work which its Viceroy has been quietly doing for years past. Unless some entirely unforeseen occurrence arises, the present ceremony must prove the culmination and the crowning moment of Lord Curzon's Indian career. His remaining year of office can only be spent in winding up the threads which have already been prepared. Therefore a better opportunity than the present could not be conceived for examining the results of his enormous and untiring industry.

Lord Curzon, as is well-known, passed through a searching preparation for his present post, and one that was apparently designed in especial for that particular end. Though a comparative stripling, he was not new either to office or to the East when he took over the rulership of the 300 millions of our Indian Empire. The son of Lord Scarsdale, the Vicar of Kedleston, Derbyshire, he passed through a brilliant career at Eton and Balliol. To a first in Mods. he added the Lothian and Arnold prize essays, and eventually a Fellowship at All Souls. The office of President of the Union prepared him for his later labours in the House of Commons. On leaving the University he went in for an extensive course of Eastern travel, in the course of which he visited Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan, the Pamirs, Siam, Indo-China and Korea. His knowledge of several of these countries has since been of use to him in his official position. His first publication, *Russia in Central Asia*, was produced in 1889. In the autumn of the same year he went to Persia as

Special Correspondent to the *Times*, and three years later issued his monumental work upon that country. While in Persia he formed strong opinions on the Persian Gulf problem and the question of railways in Persia, which have sensibly affected the foreign policy of India during the past few years.

In addition to Nasr-ed-Din, the late Shah of Persia, Lord Curzon also became personally known to Abdur Rahman, the late Amir of Afghanistan, who gave the following interesting pen-picture of his visitor in his autobiography :— *

"I received a letter from the Right Honourable Mr George Curzon (now Lord Curzon), saying that as he was travelling towards Chitral and the Pamirs, and was anxious to make my acquaintance, he would wait for my permission to come and see me. I accordingly invited him, and he was my guest at Kabul for a few days. Several friendly conversations took place between us, for though he did not understand Persian, and I did not understand English, we were able to communicate through Mir Munshi

* *The Life of Abdur Rahman.* London : John Murray.

(the private secretary). From these conversations he appeared to be a very genial, hard-working, well-informed, experienced, and ambitious young man. He was witty and full of humour, and we often laughed at his amusing stories. Though Mr Curzon's visit was a private and friendly one, and not in any way in an official capacity, yet still we touched upon and discussed all the important affairs of my Government. The special topics of conversation were as to the north-west frontier of Afghanistan, and as to my successor to the throne."

The long-expected crisis of this very succession occurred during Lord Curzon's term of office as Viceroy.

While these travels were yet unfinished, Lord Curzon entered Parliament, winning his first seat, that of the Southport division of Lancashire, from the Liberals, and holding it for twelve years. Upon his resignation the Liberals again acquired it. In the House he rapidly made his mark, becoming in turn Assistant Private Secretary to Lord Salisbury, Under Secretary of State for India, and Under Secretary of State

for Foreign Affairs. In the last two posts he acquired an invaluable familiarity with the affairs of India, and the international politics of Europe. His parliamentary reputation is still fresh in men's minds. His ability was universally recognised, while his somewhat superior manner made him enemies, as it has since done in India. The surprise occasioned by his appointment as Viceroy was as much due to the interruption of a promising career in home politics as to Lord Curzon's youth and lack of administrative experience. But it is safe to say that this fresh departure was as fortunate an experiment for Lord Curzon himself as for the Empire at large. He proved himself the man for the post at an anxious time in our national affairs, and by so doing increased his reputation more even than if he had remained at the centre of attention at home.

Thus forged into a fine weapon by his experiences, Lord Curzon entered upon the charge of our Indian Empire. He took up the task with a full recognition of his responsibilities, of the

greatness of his duties, and of his opportunities. At the dinner given to him by his old Etonian schoolfellows before he left London, he quoted the words of Carlyle:—

"I have sometimes thought what a thing it would be could the Queen in Council pick out some gallant-minded, stout Cadet, and say to him, 'Young fellow, if there do lie in you potentialities of governing, of gradually guiding, leading, and coercing to a noble goal, how sad it is they should be all lost. See, I have scores on scores of colonies. One of these you shall have as vice-king. Go you and buckle with it in the name of Heaven, and let us see what you will build it to.'"

Lord Curzon has had the opportunity of Carlyle's imaginary Cadet, and has used it to show that he had in him the potentialities of governing, and that it would indeed have been a pity had those potentialities been wasted. But to this forecast of his own career Lord Curzon added a picture of what the ideal Viceroy should be.

"What then (he asked) is the conception of his duty that an out-going Viceroy should set before himself? I have no new or startling definition to give, but the light in which it presents itself, to my mind, is this. It is his duty, first and foremost, to represent the authority of the Queen-Empress, whose name, revered more than the name of any other living sovereign by all races and classes from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, is in India both a bond of union and the symbol of power; and to associate with the personal attributes that cling about that name the conviction that the justice of her Government is inflexible, that its honour is stainless, and that its mercy is in proportion to its strength. Secondly, he should try to remember that all those people are not the sons of our own race, or creed, or clime, and that it is only by regard for their feelings, by respect for their prejudices—I will even go so far as to say by deference to their scruples—that we can obtain the acquiescence as well as the submission of the governed. Thirdly, his duty is to recognise that, though relatively far advanced in the scale of civilisation compared with the time of Lord Wellesley, or even Lord Canning, India is still but ill-equipped with the national and industrial and educational resources which are so necessary to her career, and so to

work that she may by slow but sure degrees expand to the full measure of her growth. And lastly, it is to preserve intact and secure, either from internal convulsion, or external inroad, the boundaries of that great and Imperial dominion."

How has Lord Curzon realised this ideal of his own creation? He has upheld the dignity of the Sovereign with a perception of the effect which regal pomp has upon the Oriental imagination, that is exemplified by this very Durbar. For his consideration of the native population let a Hindu prince speak:—

"We have never (said this native magnate) had a Viceroy so anxious to learn the real wishes of the children of the soil, so scrupulous in giving a patient hearing to their grievances, so full of schemes for the development of the resources of the Empire, so firmly resolved to leave India, at the conclusion of his term of office, a better, a more contented, and a more prosperous land than he found it."

Even allowing for the Oriental desire to please in these words, there is still left a large sub-

stratum of truth. Famine has greatly handicapped India during the past four years; but Lord Curzon has done what in him lay to encourage and develop the resources of the country. Under the fourth and final head his work has been, perhaps, the most difficult, though least obtrusive. Three years ago India was called upon to save South Africa for the Empire by sending the first reinforcement of 6000 men to Natal; and almost ever since she has been upwards of 10,000 men short of her proper garrison. It is hardly too much to say that the single personality of Lord Curzon has supplied the place of those 10,000 British soldiers; that by his mingled moderation and firmness he has prevented all manifestation of unrest within the boundaries of Hindustan, and so discounted the danger of affording any encouragement to our watchful enemies beyond its confines.

Turning now to the details of his government, in his second Budget speech, delivered in March 1901, Lord Curzon gave a list of twelve important reforms, which it had been his intention ever since

he came to India to carry into effect. The following is the complete list :—

(1.) A stable Frontier Policy.

(2.) The creation of the new Frontier Province.

(3.) A Reform of the Transfer and Leave Rules in the Indian Civil Service.

(4.) A diminution of Report Writing.

(5.) A stable Rate of Exchange in the Currency System.

(6.) The increase of Railways.

(7.) The encouragement of Irrigation.

(8.) A cure for Agricultural Indebtedness.

(9.) A reduction of the Telegraphic Rate between India and Europe.

(10.) The preservation of Archæological Remains.

(11.) Educational Reform.

(12.) Police Reform.

This list covers practically the whole field of Lord Curzon's activity, and in the subsequent chapters of this book it will be shown what he has done to carry out these ideals also.

CHAPTER II

RUSSIA, AFGHANISTAN AND PERSIA

INDIA is surrounded on three sides by the sea, and on the other by what Lord Rosebery has called a "cactus hedge" of mountains. It is one of the manifold duties of the Viceroy to see that this hedge is not pierced from outside by the enemies of the Empire. Incidentally also the hedge itself occasionally requires trimming. Its inhabitants, the independent tribes, though useful as a defence, are sometimes troublesome as neighbours. On the other side of the hedge are four countries, Thibet, Asiatic Russia, Afghanistan and Persia, from only one of which, Russia of course, is an invasion of British India to be feared.

Starting on the extreme north-east with the Thibetan border, invasion is practically impossible from this quarter. There have been rumours

lately of a Russian treaty with Thibet; but even if the whole country fell into the hands of Russia, that would not matter to us. Thibet is a poor country, commercially unprofitable, and the roads across the border are mere mountain tracks, difficult enough for the individual traveller and impossible for an army. Similarly across the Pamirs, near Gilgit, the only point at which Russian territory is actually conterminous with British, we have nothing to fear beyond the possibility of a few dribblets penetrating into Kashmir. At Chitral no menace to India itself is involved; but if we had not occupied that small State, Russia would have done so, and would thus have come in direct contact with the turbulent tribes upon our border, and have been in a position to foment trouble among them.

Afghanistan has hitherto been regarded as the weak spot in our defences. Every invasion of India from the north, known to history, has come through Afghanistan and that gate of India, the Khyber Pass. But the conditions of modern warfare have changed many things, and Afghanistan

should now be an easy country to defend. Its inhabitants are fierce and fanatical, and before their resistance to a Russian advance was overcome, the British army would have time to choose the most favourable position to meet the invader. According to modern military science our best position is the Kabul-Kandahar line. Kabul commands all the passes that debouch from the north, and it is only seventy miles from our outposts near Peshawar. Similarly Kandahar blocks the Russian line of advance from Kushk through Herat to Quetta, and is only seventy miles from our railway terminus at New Chaman.

The Russian railway terminus at Kushk is about the same distance from Herat. There are about 400 miles between Herat and Kandahar; thus Russia would have little more than time to seize Herat before we could occupy both Kabul and Kandahar and check her advance. It is practically certain that if Russia should ever invade Afghanistan the British army also would cross our border and advance to meet her. For political reasons we could not afford to wait inactive on

our frontier and risk a rising in the interior of India. But the Boer War has shown that modern arms of precision have so increased the advantages of the defending side that the 100,000 men we could pour across the border at the threat of danger would be able to deal with any Russian army that survived the difficulties of commissariat and transport across the Afghan mountains.

At the extreme western end of the line comes Persia, which has been gradually rising in international importance of recent years. From her present base in this direction Russia could not possibly attack India. In addition to the whole width of Persia there are 500 miles of Baluchistan between the Russian frontier and Quetta. But Russia's policy of insidious but unresting advance is too familiar for us to rest easy upon that score. Recent history seems to show that she is now directing her attention to acquire complete control of Persia and its railways. With a line of rail up to the Baluchistan border, the granaries of Khurasan and Seistan behind

her, and only the Baluch desert between her and Quetta, Russia would be in a very different position to that which she at present occupies, and the physical features of the country lay India more open to attack at this point than anywhere else along the whole line of our north-west frontier.

Turning to the internal condition of the two countries which form "buffer States" between us and Russia, Lord Curzon's term of office has been signalised by the occurrence of an event in Afghanistan which had long been anticipated by students of Central Asian politics as likely to provoke a crisis in the antagonism between us and Russia. That was the death of Abdur Rahman, the strong but cruel ruler, whom we recognised as Amir when after the second Afghan War he showed himself able to hold the throne against all comers. So long as Abdur Rahman lived the policy of preserving Afghanistan in its entirety was both obvious and simple. The wily old Amir was not entirely loyal to us. He was not averse to causing us annoyance

when he wished to display his own power, for instance by writing his book, the *Takwim-ud-din* preaching a *jehad* against the infidels, or by encouraging the Afridi mullahs to stir up the tribes against us. But he was too good a judge of his own interests to intrigue deeply with Russia. As his autobiography shows, he knew very well that in the last result our interest is to preserve Afghanistan and Russia's is to dismember it. A weaker or less crafty ruler may not recognise that point so clearly. But that is not all. Afghanistan is a mere aggregation of provinces; it is, like India, China, or Asiatic Russia, rather a geographical tract of country inhabited by different and alien tribes than a homogeneous nation. Herat was only annexed to the Afghan kingdom in the last year of Dost Mahomed's life, Balkh and the rest of Turkestan two or three years earlier, Kandahar not long before that. The different provinces are only held together by the single thread of a man's life. Afghanistan is a "one man Power." Consequently there was

the danger that, if Abdur Rahman's successor did not prove as strong a man as himself, Kabul, Kandahar, Ghazni, Herat, the Hazareh highlands, those of the Aimaks and the Usbeg provinces along the Oxus might all fall to pieces and disintegrate. Abdur Rahman was too wary and suspicious openly to appoint his successor during his own lifetime; but short of that he did all that he could to secure the succession of his eldest son, Habibullah Khan. During the last years of his life he gave Habibullah complete control of the domestic affairs of the kingdom, and chose him wives from all the most influential families in the country. These measures proved unexpectedly successful; and though Habibullah is not as strong a man as his father, he has held the throne of Afghanistan now for a year, which is no mean feat. But as Abdur Rahman chose the moment to die when we were at war in South Africa, and India was denuded of all available troops, we may be sure that Lord Curzon had some anxious moments.

It is only within the last month we have learnt that Russia took the hitherto unexampled step of applying to the British Government to be allowed to enter into direct relations with Afghanistan. The request, it is true, was confined to "frontier matters," and Lord Cranborne, in his reply, as stated in the House of Commons on October 21st last, strictly limited the possibility of intercourse to such questions as must frequently arise between two countries who have a conterminous border. Regarded on the surface this is a natural request, and might be taken as a corollary to the Russo-Afghan Boundary Commission. But on the Continent it is generally regarded as a veiled demand for a representative at Kabul. Now we ourselves have not a representative at Kabul, merely an unaccredited native agent, and we certainly cannot allow to Russia a concession we have not asked for ourselves. Besides, it was this very subject of British *versus* Russian representatives at Kabul that gave rise to the second Afghan War. It was because Shere Ali received a Russian mission under General Stoleteff, and

immediately afterwards refused to allow a British mission under Sir Neville Chamberlain and Sir Louis Cavagnari to pass through the Khyber, that Lord Lytton commenced military operations against him.

Moreover, the moment chosen by Russia to make the demand was most significant. Lord Cranborne stated in the House, on October 29th, that the Russian note was dated February 6th, 1900. Let us just consider the condition of affairs in South Africa at that moment. Ladysmith was being besieged. Our defeat at Spion Kop had occurred only a fortnight before on January 24th, and it was not till a week later, on February 13th, that Lord Roberts began his turning movement on the Modder River. Three weeks after the receipt of the Russian note, Cronje was captured, Ladysmith was relieved, the tide of war had turned in our favour, and Russia had missed her opportunity. But the choice of such a moment to make such a demand showed a very obvious desire to profit by our embarrassments.

Persia is in much the same distracted state as Afghanistan. Like Abdur Rahman, the late Shah, Naṣr-ed-Din, was a strong and far-sighted ruler. He knew better than to allow Russian influence to obtain a hold upon his country; but the present Shah, Muzaffar-ed-din is a weak and self-indulgent monarch, who in order to obtain the funds to enjoy himself in Europe has tied his country to the chariot wheels of the Tsar. This he did by means of the Russian Loan of 1900, which is secured upon the Persian customs, and so makes Russia's trade interests paramount in Persia. This is the picture which the latest traveller in Persia draws of "the Russian Octopus."*

"No railway can at this moment be constructed in Persia; the new Customs Tariff cannot be completed or passed into law until approved by Russia; turnpike tolls—by no means scarce—are all in the hands of Russia; no vehicle can enter Kasvin (on the high road from Europe and the Caspian Sea) without paying toll to a Russian company; the entire country between Julfa (on the Russian eastern frontier) and Tabriz—a distance of 200

* *The Struggle for Persia*, by Donald Stuart (Methuen).

miles—and between Tabriz and Teheran—a distance of 400 miles—has quite recently been surveyed by Russian officials with the ostensible purpose of making roads; the entire route between Resht and Anzali, on the Caspian Sea (and the direct road from Europe to Teheran), is in the hands of Russian companies, both as regards post-carts and post-stations; the Shah cannot purchase a rifle without the approval of the resident Cossack General, and as to raising money by a foreign loan or by the granting of concessions for mining or any other purpose known to free agents, it is simply prohibited in accordance with a bushel of protocols, treaties and conventions between the two high contracting powers."

In short, Persia is at this moment in everything but name a Russian province. During his term of office, Lord Curzon has done his best to encourage British-Indian trade with Persia. He has opened up the Quetta-Seistan trade route, even to the point of extending the railway seventy miles along it from Quetta to Nushki, and he has appointed Captain Chenevix Trench to watch British interests as Resident in the southern province of Persia, which most concerns us. But against the in-

fluence of the Russian loan Lord Curzon has been able to do but little.

Russia's main purpose in thus getting Persia into her power is believed to be the acquisition of a port on the Persian Gulf. In accordance with the legendary will of Peter the Great, she is always struggling for an ice-free outlet on the sea. She has lately obtained one eastwards at Port Arthur; and now she wants one southwards on the Persian Gulf. As Captain Mahan has recently pointed out, this is a question that intimately concerns British interests in India. That great strategist gives the following three reasons why Britain should distrust such a move:—*

"First, her security in India, which would be materially affected by an adverse change in political control of the Gulf; secondly, the safety of the great sea route, commercial and military, to India and the Further East, on which British shipping is still actually the chief traveller, though with a notable comparative

* "The Persian Gulf and International Relations," by Captain Mahan, *National Review* for September 1902.

diminution that demands national attention; and thirdly, the economic and commercial welfare of India, which can act politically only through the Empire, a dependence which greatly enhances obligation. The control of the Persian Gulf by a foreign State of considerable naval potentiality, a fleet in being there based on a strong military port, would reproduce the relations of Cadiz, Gibraltar and Malta to the Mediterranean. It would flank all the routes to the Further East, to India, and to Australia, the last two actually internal to the Empire, regarded as a political system; and although at present Great Britain unquestionably could check such a fleet, so placed, by a division of her own, it might well require a detachment large enough to affect seriously the general strength of her naval position."

On the same point Lord Curzon says in his book on Persia:—

"The safety of India, which is the first duty of Great Britain, the Pax Britannica that now reigns in the Southern Sea in consequence of her temperate control, the sacrifices that have been made by her in pursuance of that end, the utter absence of any Russian interests for

thousands of miles, the perfect ability of Persia in these parts to look after herself, are incontrovertible arguments against any such aggression. It can only be prosecuted in the teeth of international morality, in defiance of civilised opinion, and with the ultimate certainty of a war with this country that would ring from pole to pole."*

It is to be presumed that Lord Curzon is of the same opinion still, and he is credited with having stiffened the back of the Home Government on this subject by his official representations.

The recent sanction given by the Sultan of Turkey to the Baghdad Railway has raised the question of overland communication between India and Europe. There are two alternative courses, to link up the Indian system with the Russian Trans-Caspian system across Afghanistan, which only requires some 500 miles of line from Quetta to Kushk; and the very much longer stretch from Quetta to the Persian Gulf, which is dependent on the completion of the German line to Koweit. Lord Curzon, however, is known

* *Persia*, by Hon. G. Curzon (Longmans & Co.).

to favour the latter plan. The danger of coming into close connection with Russia in Afghanistan is too great. It means vast armaments on the scale which a conterminous frontier entails upon France and Germany in Europe; and India is too poor to afford vast armaments. Besides, the line through Persia and the Euphrates Valley proceeds on interior lines to the Trans-Caspian system, and would withdraw much of the freight and passenger traffic from that line. It would also block a possible Russian line from the Trans-Caspian system to the Persian Gulf. Sir Thomas Holdich,* however, the great authority on the Indian borderland, says that this latter line is practically impossible owing to geographical difficulties. It would cross all the mountain ranges in Persia at right angles. But the extension of the Quetta line through Kelat and Kirman to Teheran is perfectly feasible. It would proceed along the watershed of the ranges at a height of 3000 feet, without ever encountering a serious

* *The Indian Borderland*, by Sir T. Holdich (Methuen).

obstacle. Still there is no good in our being able to reach Teheran until the German line reaches Koweit, and that all depends on the Sultan and his guarantees.

It is of course possible that Russia has no desire or intention of invading India at any time, and that all these precautions to preserve buffer States and avoid railway connection are unnecessary. It is even quite probable that the periodic famines of recent years have opened the eyes of Russia to the real poverty of India, and that she does not desire a country which would afford no outlet for her surplus peasant population, and would require a class of educated administrators which she does not possess. But we cannot reckon upon any such indifference. Whatever else is uncertain, this is certain, that whether Russia desired India or not, she would always demonstrate against it as a lever to aid her schemes in China, Persia or elsewhere. We must depend, not on Russia's forbearance, but on our own strength or inaccessibility. The fact, which has just been revealed, that she

took advantage of the Boer War to push her own schemes in Afghanistan, shows that this is one of the main problems in international politics that must trouble the rest of the Indian Viceroy.

CHAPTER III

THE INDEPENDENT TRIBES

In the internal affairs of India the most difficult and never-ending problem is furnished by the turbulent and blood-thirsty Pathan tribes on our north-west frontier, who are within our sphere of influence, but have never been thoroughly controlled by us. In that, however, we are only in the same case as previous rulers of India, who one and all, Mogul, Sikh, or Afghan, found these hardy mountaineers too warlike and their fastnesses too inaccessible to make their subjugation possible. Since the time of Lord Lawrence our treatment of these independent tribes had followed two distinct and varying lines, entitled respectively "the forward policy" and "the close-border system." The views of the forward

party were voiced in Lord Lytton's minute of 1877, in which he said:—

"I believe that our north-west frontier presents at this moment a spectacle unique in the world; at least, I know of no other spot where, after twenty-five years of peaceful occupation, a great civilised power has obtained so little influence over its semi-savage neighbours, and acquired so little knowledge of them, that the country within a day's ride of its most important garrison is an absolute *terra incognita*, and that there is absolutely no security for British life a mile or two beyond our border."

The forward school desired in effect the extension of the Pax Britannica up to the Durand line, which separates our territory from that of the Amir. The close-border system, on the other hand, which is identified with the name of Lord Lawrence, and has generally been followed by the Punjab Government in the intervals between spasmodic bursts of aggression, rested satisfied with carrying civilisation up to the line of the hills, and inflicting occasional punishment for the raids of our robber neighbours. It regarded the

subjection of these tribes as desirable, but considered the immediate realisation of that object as too costly for the resources of India. It was all a question of expense. The advocates of the forward policy were chiefly military men who desired active service and medals, and did not trouble about ways and means. The advocates of the close-border system were mainly civilian administrators, who wanted all the money that could be spared for the development of their districts in the interior of India, their protection against famine and so on. These men regarded military adventures on the frontier as a waste of public money.

But both schools have equally been put out of date by the measures initiated by Lord Curzon during his term of office. When Lord Curzon landed at Bombay in December 1898, the Tirah campaign, following upon the great frontier conflagration of 1897-98 had only just been finished, and the whole question of the pacification of "the bloody border" was under consideration. Sir William Lockhart, the commander of the

Tirah Expedition, had proposed the retention of Tirah, the summer home of the Afridis, as a sanatorium for our troops; and though that proposition had been vetoed, it had practically been decided to take the Khyber Pass from the Afridis and hold it by means of a fort in the middle of the Pass itself at Ali Masjid, and another great place of arms at Landi Kohat, at the Afghan end of the Pass. Lord Curzon, by his speeches in the House of Commons, practically stood committed to the forward policy. In his speech in the big Indian debate at the opening of Parliament in 1898 he said, "It is clear that at some time or other we may have to advance to the external frontier of which I have been speaking (the Oxus), or at anyrate to take up a forward, although a less forward position, on the line of Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar." His appointment as Viceroy, therefore, was generally regarded as a distinct triumph for the forward policy. But Lord Curzon has too much force to allow himself to be bound by the spoken word. He immediately set to work to examine and

Photo by Bourne & Shepheard

THE LADY CURZON OF KEDLESTON AND HER CHILDREN, THE HON. MARY IRENE AND THE HON. CYNTHIA BLANCHE

revise his preconceived opinions in the light of the fresh evidence that was set before him. The result of this process may be seen in the Budget speech, to which reference has already been made, and which he delivered a little over two years after he reached India. He then said :—

"It has always seemed to me that a survey of the whole situation in the light of our experience, our pledges, our armaments, and our general resources, ought to be productive of a code of frontier policy, which could, with consistency and without violent interruptions, be applied to the whole line of our north-west frontier from the Pamirs to Baluchistan. Such a code we have endeavoured to evolve. Its main features consist in the withdrawal of our regular troops from advanced positions in tribal territory, and their concentration in posts upon or near to the Indian border, their replacement in tribal tracts by bodies of tribal levies trained up by British officers to act as a militia in defence of their own native valleys and hills; in other words, the substitution of a policy of frontier garrisons drawn from the people themselves, for the costly experiment of large forts and isolated posts

thrown forward into a turbulent and fanatical country. The policy has to justify itself; and that it can only do in time. I do not say that it will save us from frontier warfare or from occasional expeditions, or from chronic anxiety. . . . All I claim for it is that it is a policy of military concentration as against dispersion, and of tribal conciliation in place of exasperation."

Now let us see how this general principle was applied in details. Beginning at the north-east end of the frontier, and proceeding westwards, we come first to the Swatis, who in 1897 attacked the Malakand camp. It was necessary to hold this position, because it commands the Chitral road, and Chitral had to be retained for political reasons. Accordingly, the Malakand was strengthened by a light frontier railway from Peshawar to Dargai, and a flying column was instituted there to reinforce that part of the frontier. At the same time the regular garrison in Chitral was reduced, our troops were concentrated at Drosh, in close proximity to the Dir-Chitral line of communication, and our military strength in that country

was supplemented by native levies drawn from the Mehtar's subjects.

Next come the Afridis, who attacked the Khyber Pass held by the Khyber Rifles in August 1897. It had been proposed to take the Pass from them and make the Khyber a British highway. Lord Curzon quashed that proposal, and also the projected British forts. He withdrew the whole of the regular troops, both British and native, from all positions in the Pass, and replaced them by two battalions of reorganised and enlarged Khyber Rifles, with an increased number of British officers and an improved scale of pay. He abandoned the plan of laying a railway through the Afridi country up to the Afghan border, and instead only extended it to Jamrud, at the British end of the Pass, which was strengthened by the provision of another flying column.

South of the Afridis come the Orakzais, who with the Afridis were the object of the Tirah Expedition in 1898. They were provided for by the construction of a cart road through the

Kohat Pass, from Peshawar to Kohat, and the construction of another light frontier line from Kushalgarh, on the Indus, to Thall along the flank of the Samana ridge. A force of tribal militia, 450 strong, largely recruited from the Orakzai tribesmen, and entitled the Samana Rifles, was raised as an extra battalion of the Border Military Police, and replaced the regular garrisons on the Samana range, which were withdrawn and concentrated at Kohat. In the Kurram Valley also the Kurram Militia was augmented and reorganised in two battalions under British officers, and replaced the regular British garrison. Further south again come the great tribe of the Waziris, and from them two battalions of Waziristan Militia, 800 each, were raised, the one for the Tochi Valley or Northern Waziristan, the other for the Gomal Valley, or Southern Waziristan. Our troops were withdrawn from the Tochi Valley and concentrated at Bannu; but further developments in this direction were checked by the misconduct and subsequent blockade of the Mahsud

Waziris. Finally, the supervision and control of the whole frontier was provided for by the creation of the new Frontier Province, which requires a chapter to itself.

The only interruption to the peace of the frontier during Lord Curzon's term of office has been the blockade of the Mahsud Waziris. The great tribe of the Waziris are the largest and, with the exception of the Afridis, the most powerful tribe on the north-west frontier of India. They number in all some 40,000 fighting men, of whom a small portion reside in Afghan territory. The remainder inhabit what is nominally British territory, though it has never been thoroughly subjugated by us. The Waziris on the British side of the border are divided into the Darwesh Khel and the Mahsuds. The former are comparatively settled and peaceful. The Mahsuds, who have a fighting strength of some 8000 men, have long been the boldest and most incorrigible robbers of the border. Waziristan is the block of mountainous country which lies between the plains of India and the Afghan border, and is

bounded on the north by the Tochi River, and on the south by the Gomal River. The Mahsud country is intersected in all directions by ravines. The narrowest part of these is where the water has had to pierce its way through a range crossing its course at right angles. Such gorges, called by the natives *tangis*, are the points usually selected to oppose an enemy. As may be supposed, they form an exceedingly difficult country for military operations.

This last is the fourth time that we have been obliged to punish the Mahsuds on a large scale for their raiding proclivities. In 1860 an expedition was sent against them under Brigadier-General Chamberlain, followed by a two years' blockade. In 1881, again, after the Afghan War, they were punished by an expedition under Brigadier-General Kennedy. But it was in November 1894 that the Mahsuds performed their most notable feat of modern times in the night attack upon the camp at Wana, in which a charge of 1500 tribesmen very nearly succeeded in sweeping a British brigade off its camping ground. This was followed

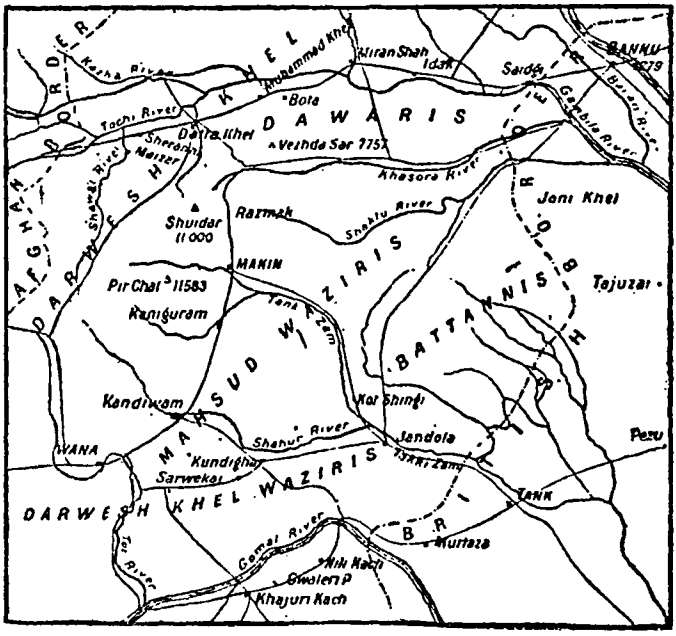
by a punitive expedition under Sir William Lockhart in 1895.

During the frontier outbreaks of 1897-1898 the Waziris were the only tribe on our border who did not break into open revolt, and therefore did not undergo punishment. In consequence of this they began to give trouble, and in November 1900 they were summoned by the Government to pay an accumulated fine of 1 lakh of rupees (£6666) for past misdeeds. This they refused to do, and in consequence a blockade was begun, which lasted for over a year. The blockade consisted of a cordon 300 miles in length of troops, militia, and border police drawn round the Mahsud country. They were not allowed to import or export anything from British territory, and as their country is not self-supporting it was hoped in time to starve them into submission. On this duty 1800 extra troops and 360 police, besides the normal garrisons of Tochi and Wana, amounting to some 3000 regulars, were employed, and also the two newly-raised militia battalions of Waziristan. The cost of such a blockade is only about

£100 a day; and it is possible to blockade a tribe for three years for the same sum as a large expedition would consume in sixteen days.

In the middle of June 1901 about Rs.70,000 out of the fine of Rs.100,000 had been paid in (£4666 out of £6666) leaving a balance of about £2000 owing. But all the respectable men amongst the Mahsuds had already paid their share and the balance was owed by the poorest and most independent section, who refused to pay the remainder. At the same time, bands of Mahsuds broke out and attacked our militia posts, reaping several small successes. Under these circumstances the Government planned a series of counter-raids, which was successfully initiated in the last week of November 1901. Four columns under the command of Colonel Dening made a simultaneous attack on the Mahsuds from four different directions. The columns started from Datta Khel on the north, and from Jandola, Sarwekai and Wana on the south, and converged on Makin in the centre of the Mahsud country. This combined counter-raid was carried out with great rapidity

and success, and was followed up by a series of isolated operations, which speedily brought the Mahsuds to terms. They paid their fine, handed



MAP OF THE MAHSUD WAZIRI COUNTRY.

in the rifles they had captured, gave up their outlaws, and accepted the principle of tribal responsibility for future offences. On March 10, 1902, the blockade was formally raised. This is the first time in their history that the country of the

Mahsuds has been successfully invaded, and they received an exceedingly sharp lesson.

The special point about these operations was the mingled economy and efficiency with which they were conducted. They were an amalgamation of the two traditional punitive methods of an expedition and a blockade. Of these two rival policies Lord Curzon said in his Budget Speech of March 1902:—

"I observe that the policy of a blockade arouses almost as conflicting emotions in the bosoms of frontier critics as used to do, for instance, the frontier policies of Lord Lawrence and Lord Lytton. Those who prefer the drastic methods of an expedition denounce a blockade, and do their best to prove that it is either a failure or a sham. Those who from the experience of past expeditions, with their shocking disproportion of cost to result, distrust that method of procedure, as strongly favour a blockade. For my own part I regard the two as alternative methods of coercing a hostile or rebellious enemy, and the distinction between them as one of policy rather than of ethics."

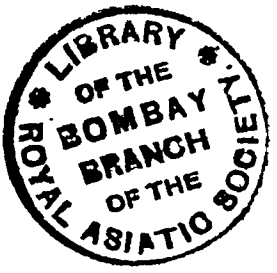
These words of Lord Curzon's were a reference

to certain criticisms expressed in India, not against the success or economy of the operations, but against the supposition that as they were called a blockade or a "counter raid," the troops concerned would not be entitled to their medal and extra pay for active service. This supposition, however, was declared by Lord Curzon to be purely gratuitous, in a letter to the *Pioneer*, dated 31st May 1902, in the course of which he said:—

"Anyone reading these sentences would undoubtedly derive the impression that in respect of dispatches, gratuities and medals these troops had been or were to be forgotten, and that their legitimate expectations were to be sacrificed to a verbal definition. There is not, and there has at no stage been, the slightest foundation for the insinuation."

Thus the Army got its medals and the Mahsuds got their beating, and everybody was satisfied. In the course of the same speech Lord Curzon remarked that the whole cost of the operations was less than 16 lakhs, which would only

have lasted an expedition on the old scale for sixteen days. In a word, Lord Curzon has showed in his administration of the frontier that, while desiring to be conciliatory, he can, on occasions where it is necessary to support the dignity of the Empire, show firmness and enterprise; and that even in the operation of punishing the Empire's enemies he is not forgetful of the impoverished condition of India's finances.



CHAPTER IV

THE NEW FRONTIER PROVINCE

THE idea of separating the unsettled from the settled districts of India, and making the whole of the border tracts into a single province, with an Administrator and staff of officers of its own, is as old as the time of Lord Lytton. The justification for such a course is obvious. On the one hand, the change would be advantageous for the settled districts of the Punjab, because it would leave the Lieutenant-Governor free to devote his whole attention to them, instead of being continually distracted by border crimes and outbreaks. On the other hand, it would be good for the unsettled tracts, because it would provide a class of officers specially trained in the frontier school, and with an expert knowledge of the tribes, amongst

whom they would spend their life. In his minute, dated 22nd April 1877, Lord Lytton put the case for a separate frontier province in words which cannot be improved upon, even in the light of all that has since happened:—

"The Viceroy," (he said), "would by means of this arrangement command the services of his own specially selected Agent, in whose hands the threads of all our border politics and tribal relations would be concentrated. The time of such an Agent could be devoted almost entirely to purely frontier duties; and he would be better able than any Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab can possibly be to visit with adequate frequency, freedom of mind, and singleness of interest, all parts of the frontier; thus making himself personally and thoroughly familiar with the social facts, individual characters and local sentiments which claim incessant and concentrated attention in the successful administration of border politics. The political and administrative conduct of the frontier would be in the same hands, and pass through the same channels. All division of responsibility and all antagonism of schools and systems would thus be avoided."

This idea was approved by nearly every frontier authority from that time onwards. It was supported by such experienced executive officers as Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Henry Durand, Lord Roberts, Sir James Browne, Sir Robert Warburton, Sir Robert Sandeman, and Sir William Lockhart; and by such tried administrators as Lord Lytton, Sir Charles Aitchison, Sir George Chesney, and Lord Lansdowne. In addition to Lord Lytton's opinion, it will be sufficient to quote that of Sir Robert Warburton, who was Warden of the Khyber for eighteen years in the transition period immediately preceding Lord Curzon's advent, and who only handed over charge of the Pass a few days before the Afridis broke into open revolt in 1897. This experienced officer said *,—

"The only way to prevent future wars on the frontier, and to create a friendly impression on the wild man of the independent hills is to alter the system which has proved useless for thirty-

* *Eighteen Years in the Khyber*, by Sir Robert Warburton (John Murray).

five years. Replace it by the scheme which His Excellency Lord Lytton intended carrying out when he was Viceroy of India, and which met with the approval of the Marquis of Salisbury and the Government then in power. Let there be a Chief Commissioner or officer on special duty (no matter what name he may be called by), one well up in Persian and Pashtu, and able to visit every spot wherever his presence is required. Let him be supplied with a sufficient staff to carry on the higher civil, criminal and revenue details, so as to give him sufficient leisure for his harder work. Let Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, etc., do purely and solely the civil work of their districts. And, lastly, have political and police officers to undertake the trans-border police duties. Let all these be selected officers, with fair pay and promotion, passing their entire service on that frontier, with no danger of transfer to a Cis-Indus charge. Give this scheme, which has thus been briefly noticed, a fair trial, and there is every certainty of a vast improvement of the relations between the Indian Government and the independent hillmen quickly following."

This is the scheme which has been practically carried out in its entirety by Lord Curzon;

the only opposition to it came from past or present Lieutenant-Governors of the Punjab, who regarded it as a blow to the importance of the province with which their name and career were associated.

The new province, which is entitled the North-West Frontier Province, and was brought into being by Lord Curzon in February 1901, consists of the whole of the Trans-Indus districts of the Punjab, as far south as, and including, Dera Ismail Khan. The officer at the head of the new province is an Agent to the Governor-General, and a Chief Commissioner, of equal rank and position with the Agent to the Governor-General and Chief Commissioner of Baluchistan, and his charge consists of the four districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan, with the tribal country beyond their limits, and also of the five Political Agencies of Dir, Swat, Chitral, of the Khyber, of the Kurram Valley, and of North and South Waziristan, that is to say, Wana and the Tochi Valley. The Agent has

been given both a Revenue and a Judicial Commissioner to assist him in the administrative and judicial work of the new province, and the officers employed in it have been brought on to the list of the Political Department of the Government of India. Thus the new Province can draw the men best suited to its particular duties from the cream of the Indian Civil Service.

It is estimated that the area detached from the Punjab Province by this arrangement approximates to one-fourteenth of its total area, one-fifteenth of its total revenue, and one-eighteenth of its population. This subtraction cannot be regarded as of serious importance to the Punjab itself, because the population, revenue and wealth of the Cis-Indus Punjab have largely increased during the last twenty years. The province has grown and developed in every direction, in common with the rest of India, and in addition it has received the benefit of the great schemes of canalisation connected with the Chenab and Jhelum Rivers, which are already bringing a large increase of cultiva-

tion and population. The enormous Sind-Sagar scheme, which has recently been undertaken, alone brings nearly 2 million acres under cultivation, and thereby must largely increase the labours and responsibilities of the local Government.

Lord Curzon himself claimed for this new province at the time of its inception that:—

"It will express and enforce the direct responsibility of the Government of India for frontier affairs. It will enable the Viceroy to conduct the most important business of the Department of which he is the personal chief. It will free the management of frontier politics from the delays that are inseparable from a chain of reference, whose strength is sacrificed to its length. It will promote greater rapidity, and consequently greater freedom of action. Its tendency should be not towards aggression but towards peace; since war with the tribes is generally the result of ignorance or indecision at earlier stages. It will entrust tribal management exclusively to those who know the tribes. It should train up a school of officers worthy of the most critical but splendid duty that is imposed upon any of the officers of the Queen's Government in India."

As the new province has not yet been in working order for two years, it is still too early to pronounce a final judgment upon the realisation of all these predictions. But at least in founding it Lord Curzon showed that he had the energy and courage necessary to carry out a reform that had been discussed and approved for thirty years without ever going any further.

The first Agent of the new Frontier Province is Colonel Deane, who was Political Officer with the Chitral Expedition in 1895, and was in charge of the Dir-Swat-Chitral Agency at the time of the outbreak in Swat in 1897. Colonel Deane is an experienced frontier officer, who is thoroughly acquainted with the character of the tribes. He is a strong and capable administrator, and the only defect with which he has ever been charged is a tendency to interfere too much in the internal affairs of the tribesmen. But certainly that tendency has not been observable in his new office. Colonel Deane had already taken over charge of the frontier at the time of the

Mahsud Waziri blockade, and he helped largely to bring those operations to their successful conclusion. Lord Curzon said in his last Budget speech that the new arrangement had resulted in "the quicker despatch of business" in Waziristan.

As has been said, it is yet too early to speak with certainty, but it seems probable that the greater stability and continuity of our frontier policy, brought about by the new province, the extension of trade and intercourse caused by the frontier light railways, the increase of discipline bred by the frontier militias, and the growth of recruiting among the tribesmen for the ranks of our Native Army, will gradually but surely bring these waste places of the earth within the pale of civilisation.

CHAPTER V

FAMINE ADMINISTRATION

THE forces of nature have certainly not fought upon the side of Lord Curzon during the past four years. Both plague and famine have been practically endemic in India throughout his term of office. Plague has yearly taken its toll of thousands of lives in the city and district of Bombay; and during the past two years it has spread with great virulence to the Punjab. Even at the present time elaborate precautions are being taken to prevent a visitation of the dread disease to the camp at Delhi during the Durbar.

But the case of famine is far worse. There had been a severe famine in 1897, from which the country had not yet recovered, when in 1899, almost directly after Lord Curzon's arrival, it was plunged into the midst of a far worse visitation. The Great Famine of 1899-1900 was, in Lord Curzon's own words, "the severest that India has ever known." The numbers on relief reached the

WAITING FOR DEATH
(A Scene in a Native State)

unprecedented total of considerably over 6 million persons. It affected an area of over 400,000 square miles, and a population of 60 millions, of whom 25 millions belonged to British India, and the remainder to Native States. Nearly a quarter of the entire population of India came within the range of relief operations. On a cautious estimate the total production of the country was a quarter, if not a third less than usual. This represented a loss of over £50,000,000 sterling, to which must be added the value of at least 4 million of cattle. It must also be remembered that this loss was not spread over the whole of India, but concentrated in one portion of the continent, a large part of which had suffered severely in the previous famine.

The worst point about this Great Famine was that the complete failure of the monsoon caused not only a crop failure, but also a fodder and water famine on an enormous scale. Agriculture is practically the only industry in India; and the agriculturist invests all his capital in the purchase of plough-cattle and milch kine. This fodder

famine therefore almost annihilated the working capital of the agricultural classes. The loss of human life in British India alone is estimated at 1¼ million persons, of whom quarter of a million belonged to Native States, but died in British territory. In a country the size of India, inhabited by an ignorant and secretive population, it is impossible to rely on the figures furnished by the natives. The only possible method is to take the total mortality of the year, subtract from it the average mortality for the past decade, and the excess is roughly the number who have died from famine. The following is the complete table from which this reckoning is taken :—

Province.	Deaths recorded in 1900.	Decennial Average of Death.	Excess in 1900.
Central Provinces .	539,234	351,548	187,686
Berar	236,022	110,096	125,926
Bombay . . .	1,218,650	473,274	745,376
Ajmer	65,067	14,609	50,458
Punjab	245,978	118,569	127,409
Total .	2,304,951	1,068,096	1,236,855

But of this 1¼ million it is known that 230,000 persons died of cholera and smallpox brought on by famine conditions. This leaves 1 million persons that died of actual starvation. But these figures only relate to British India. Even to arrive at such a rough estimate as this you have to be sure that at least all the deaths are recorded. There is no such surety about a Native State. There are no reliable statistics in a Native State at all, no means of ascertaining the mortality there. In the recesses of these ill-administered little principalities, careless of human life, the people die off like flies, with no eye to mark them, and no British official to record them. The only means of tracing their disappearance is in the decennial census which is taken for the whole of India.

The Census of 1901 tells a terrible tale of human suffering and wholesale loss of life, which had hitherto been successfully burked. During the decade 1891-1901 the total population of India only increased by some 7 millions, which was a great deal less than it should have been. But

the population of British India increased by about 10½ millions, which leaves an actual decrease of some 3½ millions in the Native States. But that is not all. On proportionate figures, instead of their being a decrease, there should have been an increase of about 6 millions. That means that in ten years some 10 million persons disappeared out of these Native States without leaving a trace behind them. Their bones are probably rotting unregarded in the jungle. In the Rajputana Agency alone the population fell by about 2¼ millions out of 12 millions, a rate of over 19 per cent. Is it any wonder that in his famine statement of October 1900 Lord Curzon said: — "I do not speak of the mortality in the Native States, which has in many cases been shocking, because the Government of India cannot be held responsible for a system which it does not control."

But Lord Curzon's own famine record is not entirely above criticism. During the first few months of the famine the Government of India issued a Circular Letter to the local Governments,

calling their attention to the exceptional circumstances of the situation, and suggesting a greater stringency in famine tests. The reason for this action was that the famine of 1897 had weakened the resistance of the people, and habituated them to Government relief, and numbers of persons went on the relief works who were not in a state of destitution, or who could have obtained credit to tide them over till better times. Lord Curzon said:—"I hear in some quarters of village labourers going on to the works simply to fill the slack time until the cultivation of the fields begins in the spring. I hear in others of wages fixed under the Famine Commission scale which exceed the prevailing market rates." It was to prevent such occurrences as this, and to avoid sapping the moral fibre of the nation by wholesale pauperisation, that the Circular was issued. In principle, perhaps, it may have been justified. It was at any rate well-intentioned. But in practice it turned out unfortunately.

The effect of such a recommendation depends of course largely on the spirit in which it is

interpreted by the local Government. In the Central Provinces, which were caught unprepared by the famine of 1897, and suffered in consequence a heavy mortality, the local authorities had learnt by bitter experience. They turned a deaf ear to the Circular, went on calmly with their village works, never allowed the wages to fall to the "penal minimum," and were rewarded by coming out of the ordeal with flying colours. Lord Curzon's Government afterwards said that their liberal policy of relief saved thousands of lives. But in Bombay, whose administration obtained an unenviable notoriety for hard-heartedness throughout the famine, the Circular fell upon stony ground, and did immense harm. Gujarat, which had hitherto been known as "the garden of India," is situated in the Bombay Presidency. The rainfall there is so regular and so abundant, that scarcity had not been known for a century, and the peasantry were among the most prosperous in India. Upon this smiling land the drought descended in its full force. The people, instead of having a reserve of stamina, as was

expected, had become soft-fibred by prosperity, and collapsed at once under the unaccustomed strain. They died off like flies from hunger, and on the top of that came a wave of cholera, which heightened tenfold the horror of the situation. In Broach the monthly death-rate rose from 2·96 *per mille* in October 1899 to 24·83 in May 1900. In the Panch Mahals the death-rate of May was 46·60 *per mille*. These districts were ravaged by cholera; but in August 1900 one district of Gujarat yielded a death-rate of 15·21 *per mille*, exclusive of epidemic disease. These figures cannot, of course, be entirely attributed to the Circular; but it undoubtedly encouraged the Bombay Government in minimising the gravity of the situation until it was too late.

But as soon as Lord Curzon realised the ill effects that his Circular was producing in Bombay he took immediate steps to remedy them. In his Famine Statement of October 1900 he said:—

"Gujarat supplies another instance of the degree

in which we have accentuated and added to the flexibility of the Famine Code. When the great outbreak of cholera had disorganised the large relief works, and had driven the terrified workers away to their homes, and when extraordinarily high death-rates revealed the existence of very wide-spread destitution and suffering, the Government of India did not hesitate to advise the Bombay Government to meet the situation by enlarging the customary bounds of gratuitous relief, and by opening petty village works to take the place of the deserted public works relief camps."

If the Bombay Government had had a spark of energy or humanity in its composition, it would not have waited for this advice to take measures to save the people who were dying by thousands on its hands. As it was, the process in numberless instances amounted to locking the stable door after the steed had been stolen, and an appreciable amount of this excessive mortality must be attributed to the action of the Circular. Nevertheless, in spite of this object-lesson, Lord Curzon continued to defend the initial policy of his Government, and to maintain that it was justified by regard for the moral fibre of the famine-sufferers

and the pockets of the taxpayers. Continuing the same speech, he said :—

"I should like to add that, in my opinion, there was no inconsistency between the position taken up by the Government of India in the first months of the famine, and their subsequent attitude in permitting a vast extension of gratuitous relief during the rains in the Central Provinces, and in counselling the Government of Bombay to relax the conditions of relief in Gujarat when cholera had disorganised the large works. Conditions are radically different at the beginning and at the height of a famine; and a degree of firmness at the outset is essential, which would, at a later stage, be altogether out of place. If this be borne in mind, our policy will on examination prove to have been consistent throughout. On the one hand, we have set our face against indiscriminate and pauperising charity, and have endeavoured to insist on relief being administered with the care and method which we owe to the taxpayer and to the exchequer. On the other hand, we have been prepared to accept any expenditure of which it could be shown that it was required to save life, or to mitigate genuine distress."

These are specious words, but no words can ex-

plain away or palliate the loss of those quarter of a million lives. Lord Curzon's most valid defence is that the responsibility for the harsh application of his Circular did not really rest with him but with others; and that when he discovered its misapplication he at once revoked his own policy. In this and other instances he has shown the elastic instinct of the statesman to learn by failure.

But with the single exception of this ill-omened Circular Lord Curzon did everything that was possible to mitigate the effects of this unparalleled famine. The scheme of relief was modelled on the recommendation of the Famine Commission of 1898, which laid stress on the necessity for starting relief before the people have run down, of extending the area of gratuitous relief, especially in the form of kitchen relief for children and old people, of meting out special treatment to aboriginal and forest tribes, and of starting small village relief works in special cases in preference to large works. Lord Curzon's Government found

the Commission's scale of wages too high, and its recommendations for gratuitous relief too generous; but that aid was not really grudged where necessary is shown by a comparison between the famine of 1900 and that of 1897. In 1900 the high-water mark of relief was 6 millions as against 4 in the previous famine; the ratio of relief was 18 per cent. as against 10 per cent. in 1897; while in the small district of Merwara actually 75 per cent. of the population came on relief. In the two years 1899-1900 and 1900-1901, the Government spent £10,000,000 sterling on famine relief. In the aggregate 1,135,353,000 people were relieved—a total not remotely removed from the estimated population of the world. These are eloquent figures.

Owing to the Boer War being in progress in 1900, and the demands upon private charity for the relief of the distressed Uitlanders and the assistance of our own wounded soldiers, the Famine Fund of 1900 did not reach the same

dimensions as that of 1897, in spite of the greater severity of the calamity. In 1897 the total amount was 170 lakhs (£1,130,000) as against 140 lakhs (£930,000) in 1900. Out of this total the United Kingdom contributed 88½ lakhs (£583,000) as against 123 lakhs (£820,000) in 1897; but, as Lord Curzon said, "in the circumstances of the year it is a noble gift." This money was chiefly spent on cattle and seed to give a fresh start in life to the cultivators who had been ruined by the famine, and in making allotments to Native States. "Now I have got through to the other side," said a poor cultivator, with tears in his eyes, to the English officer who had given him a few rupees to buy fodder for his famished bullocks.

The general causes of famine are beyond the province of discussion here; but it may be briefly remarked that the conditions that produce it are twofold. In the first place, we have in India an enormous population of nearly 300 millions,

which has almost reached a point at which the soil refuses to support any more. This is sufficiently shown by the great decline in the rate of increase of the population observable in the Census of 1901. In ordinary years a large proportion of this population live on the bounty of the earth; but they live from hand to mouth and have no reserve. Directly the rains fail and a drought comes, starvation stares them in the face. India depends for its chief harvest of the year on the monsoon rains, which last from July to September. These in turn depend on the monsoon currents which cross the Indian Ocean from South Africa, and after leaving India proceed onwards to Australia. In recent years the Government of India have started a Meteorological Department, which with the assistance of the Observatory at the Cape issues an annual forecast of the incidence of the rains. On the whole these are moderately accurate. The fact that the recent sequence of famine years in India has exactly coincided with the severe drought which has

wrought such injury to stock in Australia, shows that both countries depend on the same set of conditions for their rainfall, and that those conditions have recently been unfavourable. The death of sheep in Australia is translated into the death of human beings in India, because the population there lives so near the margin of subsistence. In considering the general question of famines, however, it is not sufficiently recognised that India has no Poor Law system. Every year in England we spend over £10,000,000 on poor relief, and think nothing of it. In an exceptional year in India we spend half that sum on a population nearly ten times as great, and marvel at the necessity for it. It is to be hoped that we are now at the end of the recent cycle of lean years in India. The drought in Australia has broken; and in his last speech Lord Curzon said that the timely and beneficial rains had removed all danger of another famine, and brought him the happiest weeks that he had spent in India.

Finally, it must be placed to Lord Curzon's credit that at the worst period of the famine, and at the most scorching part of the hot weather, he left the heights of Simla, a thing never done by any Viceroy before, and went for a tour round the famine camps in order to see for himself the condition of the people and do what he could to alleviate it. This one act of humanity and consideration was worth more to the people of India than many lakhs of rupees.

CHAPTER VI

IRRIGATION AND RAILWAYS

THERE is a frequent tendency among critics of the Government of India to regard irrigation-canals and railways as alternative and opposing methods for mitigating the horrors of famine. This tendency, of course, is merely an accident due to the limited financial resources of India, and to the fact that money which is spent on one of these purposes is *ipso facto* withdrawn from the other. Rightly regarded, however canals and railways are complementary to each other in a comprehensive scheme of famine prevention. But starting from the beginning, it was necessary that one should take precedence of the other in the matter of construction. Up to the present, the pride of place has been

held by railways. As the Famine Commission of 1901 said, "To put the food-supply of the country in circulation was necessarily the first object of a wise famine policy; to protect and develop the supply itself should be its second object; and this is the function of agricultural development generally and of irrigation in particular."

But there are signs that the railway development of India is nearing completion, and that there will soon be more time and money to spend on the construction of canals, wells and tanks. At present there are 25,529 miles of railway in India,* of which 3000 miles were added during Lord Curzon's first three years of office, while 2000 more are under construction. The total capital outlay on all Indian railways up to March 1901 was £215,668,637, yielding a percentage of 4·71, as against only £22,714,721 on irrigation works, yielding a per-

* Parliamentary Paper—East India: Accounts and Estimates, 1902-1903.

centage of 7·33. This gives the measure of the disproportion in the outlay between the two forms of protective works. But now the Famine Commission says that the time has come for "a new departure in famine policy which would place irrigation works in the place that protective railways have hitherto occupied in the famine insurance programme."

Lord Curzon during his term of office has encouraged irrigation more than his predecessors, but he does not pin his faith to it as a means of regenerating the future of India. He has raised the annual outlay on it to 1 crore (£666,000) from about three-fourths of that sum; and during the present year the total outlay including famine works is 139 lakhs, or £927,000. But in his Budget Speech of 1900 Lord Curzon gave the following exposition of the irrigation policy of his Government:—

"Now I have had a very careful estimate made out for me of the extent of *fresh* ground

in the whole of India which we are likely to be able to bring under cultivation, either by new irrigation projects or by extensions of existing systems. Under the head of Productive, that is works which may be expected to yield a net revenue that will more than cover the interest on the capital outlay, the estimated increment is about 3½ million acres, and the estimated outlay between £8,000,000 and £9,000,000 sterling. Under the head of Protective works, that is works which will not pay, and which inasmuch as they constitute a permanent financial burden on the State, can only be undertaken in exceptional cases, and then as a rule do very little, towards the prevention of famine, we contemplate spending about 10 lakhs a year (£66,000), and shall probably in this way about double the area of 300,000 acres which is covered by that character of work at the present time. It seems, therefore, that the total practicable increase to the irrigable area of India under both heads will not amount to much more than 4,000,000 acres."

As the total area already irrigated was, according to the same speech, 19,000,000 acres, an

addition of only 4,000,000 is a decidedly conservative estimate. It does not satisfy the extreme advocates of irrigation; nor does it even seem to square with the findings of the recent Famine Commission who say: — "The evidence which we have taken and our own experience show that there is a wide field for the construction of irrigation works. All provinces do not, indeed, present practicable schemes for the construction of great canals; but the possibilities of smaller protective works have in no province been exhausted, while in some provinces they have as yet hardly been examined. For storage tanks, reservoirs and, above all, irrigation wells, the scope and the necessity are very great."

Lord Curzon's estimate of the irrigable capacity of India would have been a bitter disappointment to Sir Arthur Cotton, the great engineer, who constructed the Godavery and Kistna Canals in Madras. Sir Arthur had a theory that it was possible to irrigate the

whole of India from one central system. Speaking in 1879 he said:—

"Suppose the £160,000,000 sterling that the railways have cost for 7000 miles had been spent at the rate of £3000 a mile on 50,000 miles of steamboat canal, what would have been the state of India now, for instance, in respect of the famine? Every corner of the famine districts would have been now within easy reach of the most productive tract in India. . . . If people could only see the life put into Godavery by the canals, though without steam, the multitudes of both goods and passenger boats that swarm on them, they might form some idea of what would be the state of things if the same district were put in communication with all India by the same means."

The reply of the Government of India to this would be that you cannot have canals without water, and that there is not the water in India to supply such a universal system of canals. But it must be remembered that Lord Curzon and his Government are dependent for their

information upon their engineers; and that at the best it is the estimate of one engineer against another. Sir Arthur Cotton's Godavery scheme was regarded in his own day as visionary in the extreme, until it was actually carried out; and now it has turned the Godavery district from one of the most famine-stricken areas in India into one of the most prosperous.

Now let us see what irrigation has done for India as a whole, and for the Punjab in particular, the province that has made the greatest strides of recent years. There are now over 13,000 miles of canals in India, consisting of major irrigation works, minor works, protective works, and navigation canals; and irrigating, as we have seen, over 19,000,000 acres. In the year ending March 1901 the major irrigation works covered 10½ million acres, yielded a total revenue of £1,630,000, and produced 7·14 per cent. on their capital outlay. But the results for the Punjab alone are much

better than this.* In that province three great schemes of irrigation have recently been put into operation entitled the Chenab, the Jhelum and the Bari-Doab; while a fourth scheme, the Sind-Sagar, is in contemplation. The Chenab Canal has a total of 2489 miles of main line, branch canals, and distributaries. It commands an area of 2,646,000 acres, of which 1,828,800 acres were matured in 1900-1901, the crops being valued at £3,369,000. The greater part of this land was given out by Government in peasant holdings, some to military pensioners, and some reserved for breeding purposes for our native cavalry regiments. A few lots that were sold rose in value during the past decade from £3 an acre to £7, 10s. an acre. On this land there is a colony of 800,000 souls, almost entirely imported from other tracts; while several large towns have sprung into existence, including Lyallpur, with a population of 10 millions. It

* *See* a paper read by Mr Sydney Preston before the Indian Section of the Society of Arts, April 17, 1902.

is expected that this canal will eventually irrigate 2½ million acres, raising crops worth £5,000,000 annually. It has a flow of water nearly fourteen times the ordinary discharge of the Thames at Teddington. The net revenue for 1900-1901 was 18·18 per cent. on the capital outlay; but that included large remissions, and the real revenue was 24·58 per cent. As the Government of India can borrow money at 3½ per cent., they make a profit of 21 per cent. on the scheme. Nor is this large return obtained by grinding the cultivator. The Government only took one-eighth of the produce for their share, and left the cultivator £2,981,000. The close connection between irrigation and railways is shown by the fact that the colony was within an ace of proving a failure until a railway was built to carry off its surplus produce. Such projects as this take a desert and make it blossom like the rose.

The Jhelum scheme was only started in 1901;

but it already irrigates 10,000 acres, and is expected in time to extend to 500,000 acres, accommodating an increased population of 400,000 persons. The Lower Bari-Doab scheme will add another 500,000 acres and the same number of persons. Finally, there is the Sind-Sagar project which is expected to reclaim an area of 1,750,000 acres; but Mr Preston, who is one of the heads of the Punjab Irrigation Department, says that the district is covered with enormous masses of sandhills, and he foresees great engineering difficulties in the realisation of the project. In March 1901 the Punjab canals consisted of:—

Main lines	3,000	miles.
Branches	1,622	„
Distributaries	11,723	„
Total,	16,345	„

These canals in January of this year irrigated over 6½ million acres of crops, an area which is expected to go on increasing for some time. But in regarding these astonishing figures it

must be remembered that the Five Rivers of the Punjab make it the finest country in the world for irrigation schemes, and that the rest of India must not be judged by this high standard.

Nevertheless, with such an object-lesson before him, Lord Curzon obviously could not rest content with an estimate of 4,000,000 acres as the possible addition to the irrigated land of India. Accordingly, he appointed an Irrigation Commission, which is still sitting, to inquire into the whole subject. As to the scope of this Commission, he said in March 1901:—

"I want to be quite sure that no sources of water-supply or water-storage are neglected or ignored in this country. They may not always be great rivers flowing down unimpeded to the sea, though people at home seem to think that any river ought to be capable of being tapped in the Himalayas and diffused either into the Central Provinces, or Gujarat, or Berar. Neither do I postulate everywhere profitable or remunerative schemes. What I want to ensure

is, that in each province the sources of water-supply best suited to it, whether they be canals, or tanks, or wells, shall be scientifically investigated and mathematically laid down, so that we may be presented with a continuous programme, which we may pursue in ordinary years as an insurance against the bad years when they come."

In appointing this Commission Lord Curzon did the best he could for this important subject of irrigation. But the chief drawback of a Commission is that it will require another Viceroy of Lord Curzon's energy and determination to carry its recommendations into effect, and such Viceroys do not grow on blackberry bushes.

CHAPTER VII

BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

THE traditional view of "the fabled wealth of Ind," of the fortunes to be made in "the land of the Pagoda tree," has not yet entirely died out in England; but the impression created by the riches of returning Anglo-Indian Nabobs is in process of rapid extinction by the recurrent famines of the past few years and the frequent necessity for Mansion House Funds. Thus a truer estimate of the real state of India is gradually penetrating the minds of the British people. They are beginning to recognise that India is a country inhabited by an enormous number of individuals, and thus affording a large field for trade, but that each of those individuals is, according to our standard of comfort, miserably poor. The spread

of this knowledge has been hastened of recent years by a school of writers, connected with the Indian National Congress, who have laid great stress on the poverty of India and have even gone so far as to attribute this poverty to British rule. Perhaps the extreme instance of this school, because he is not a native of India but an Englishman, is Mr William Digby, who has written a book entitled in irony *Prosperous British India*, in which the statistics overflow even on to the cover, stating that the average income of a native of India was in 1850, 2d.; in 1880, 1½d.; and in 1900, ¾d. If these figures were correct, they would undoubtedly constitute a grave indictment of British rule in India; but it may be said at once that Lord Curzon disputes them in their entirety, and that they are not supported by official calculations.

But even though Mr Digby and his Indian coadjutors, Mr Romesh Dutt and Mr Dadabhai Naoroji, hold extreme, it might almost be said extravagant, views, they are undoubtedly actuated

by a genuine interest in the poverty-stricken condition of the Indian cultivator, which also cannot be disputed. Most Indian Viceroys would have passed over the representations of such well-meaning faddists in contemptuous indifference; but Lord Curzon has sufficient breadth of mind to recognise the residuum of truth even in an overstated case. His training, moreover, in the House of Commons has taught him perhaps an excessive deference to public opinion. The consequence of this is that Lord Curzon issued a resolution, dated 16th January 1902, dealing exhaustively with the Land Revenue System of India, in answer to a memorial of certain retired Anglo-Indian officials, and an astonished world beheld for the first time an Indian Viceroy entering into public controversy with his critics.

The strong point in the Indian Congress case, the poverty of the cultivator, is established by Lord Curzon's own figures. There is a difference of a few rupees between the two estimates, but even Lord Curzon admitted in

his Budget Speech of 1901 that the average income of the native of India is Rs.30 (£2) per annum, and that the average income of the agriculturist is Rs.20 (£1 6s. 8d.). Just think what that means. Each member of a peasant's family has to be fed, clothed and housed on a little under a penny a day, and even then no margin is left to buy seed for the next year's harvest. This poverty is officially admitted and indisputable. Is it any wonder that the people have no reserve, and the moment the harvest fails they starve in heaps?

But it is when they come to the corollary to be drawn from these facts that Lord Curzon and his critics part company most distinctly. Out of his miserable average of £2 a year, each native of India has to pay in taxation and Land Revenue, 3s. 3¼d. That is undoubtedly a high percentage. The Congress party say it is too high, that the poverty of India is increasing, and that the frequent

famines are due first to an abnormally high Land Revenue, and secondly to the drain of "the Home Charges." Lord Curzon admits that taxation is as high as it can reasonably be carried. In speaking of the income of the cultivator he says, "I do not claim that these calculations represent any very brilliant or gratifying result." But he maintains that the poverty of India is not increasing, that on the contrary the average income of India has increased since 1880 from Rs.27 to Rs.30 and the income of the cultivator from Rs.18 to Rs.20. These figures are at least as reliable as Mr Digby's. Lord Curzon further maintains that the frequency of famine is not due to the incidence of the Land Revenue, but to the damage done by drought, which is so great as to dwarf all considerations of taxation. It is estimated that in the Central Provinces the agricultural classes have lost 40 crores of rupees (£26,000,000) in the last seven years, an amount equal to the total land

revenue of fifty years, while the State has expended there on famine relief seven years' land revenue since 1896.

In his resolution of January 16, 1902, Lord Curzon says:—"There is no country in the world, where the meteorological and economic conditions are at all similar to those prevailing in India, that could by any land-revenue system that might possibly be devised escape the same results." But though a famine cannot be prevented, it may be mitigated; and with that object in view the Government lays down the following thirteen propositions:—

"(1.) That a permanent settlement, whether in Bengal or elsewhere, is no protection against the incidence and the consequences of famine.

"(2.) That in areas where the State receives its land revenue from landlords progressive moderation is the keynote of the policy of the Government, and that the standard of 50 per cent. of the assets is one which is almost uniformly observed in practice, and is more often departed from on the side of deficiency than of excess.

"(3.) That in the same areas the State has not objected and does not hesitate to interfere by legislation to protect the interest of the tenants against oppression at the hands of the landlords.

"(4.) That in areas where the State takes the land revenue from the cultivators the proposal to fix the assessment at one-fifth of the gross produce (as recommended by the Congress party) would result in the imposition of a greatly increased burden upon the people.

"(5.) That the policy of long term settlements is gradually being extended, the exceptions being justified by the conditions of local development.

"(6.) That a simplification and cheapening of the proceedings connected with new settlements, and the avoidance of the harassing invasion of an army of subordinate officials, are a part of the deliberate policy of the Government.

"(7.) That the principle of exempting or allowing for improvements is one of general acceptance, but may be capable of further extension.

"(8.) That assessments have ceased to be made upon prospective assets.

"(9.) Local taxation as a whole, though susceptible of some redistribution, is neither immoderate nor burdensome.

"(10.) That over-assessment is not, as alleged, a general or widespread source of poverty and indebtedness in India, and that it cannot fairly be regarded as a contributary cause of famine. The Government of India have further laid down liberal principles for future guidance, and will be prepared, where the necessity is established, to make a further advance in respect of

"(11.) The progressive and graduated imposition of large enhancements;

"(12.) Greater elasticity in revenue collection, facilitating its adjustment to the variations of the seasons and the circumstances of the people;

"(13.) A more general resort to the reduction of assessments in cases of local deterioration, where such reduction cannot be claimed under the terms of the settlement."

The resolution concludes by enunciating the principle that "the true function of Government is to lay down broad and generous principles for the guidance of its officers, with becoming regard to the traditions of the province and the circumstances of the locality, and to prescribe moderation in enhancement and sympathy in

collection," and by making the dogmatic statement that the revenue, "which is more lenient in its incidence than at any previous stage of Indian history, is capable of being levied from the people with surprisingly little hardship and without discontent." The fact is, that the land revenue is practically the rent paid by the cultivator to the State, it is the mainstay of Indian finance, and the Indian Government could not get on without it.

Into the other indictment relating to the Home Charges, Lord Curzon has not gone at equal length; but the state of things is very much the same there. The burden undoubtedly presses hardly upon so poor a man as the Indian taxpayer, but the Government of the country could not be carried on without it. The Home Charges for 1902-1903 come to £17,879,500 out of a total estimated revenue of £74,370,400. That means that over a fifth of the Indian revenue is spent every year outside the bounds of the country. Such a heavy remittance as

that would be a serious drain upon the resources of the richest country in the world. But in return for this India has received good value. £3,000,000 of it is interest upon English capital invested in the country, and £6,500,000 the returns from the railways. Both of these have helped to develop the country, and constitute valuable assets. For the remainder, India obtains a highly efficient army, much better prepared for active service than our home army, as we saw in the Boer War, and a good, though expensive Civil Service. The Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, which was appointed under Lord Elgin, and handed in its report under Lord Curzon, obtained an annual grant to the Indian army from the Imperial Government of £257,000; but that is a mere flea-bite to the £17,733,600 which forms the military estimates for the present year. It is undoubtedly unjust that India should have to pay the whole expense of an army which is chiefly maintained to guard against the Russian

menace. Our antagonism against Russia is an affair for the Empire and not for India alone. But a revision of the Home Charges and of the Indian Budget under this head will have to wait until the Colonies are prepared to take their share in a universal scheme of Imperial Defence. That is still a dream of the future, and Lord Curzon has not touched this reform at all, evidently because it has not yet come within the scope of practical politics.

With regard to the Civil Service it would be impossible to cheapen what is probably the finest administrative machine in the world without spoiling it. But Lord Curzon has attempted to remedy its one special defect. The Indian Civilian of recent years has shown an increasing tendency to become a bureaucrat instead of an autocrat. All the great men of Indian history, John Lawrence, Nicholson, Edwardes, Sandeman, Jacob, were without exception autocrats who ruled their districts after the patriarchal manner with an iron hand. But they knew their charges

thoroughly, spent their lives among them, and were loved by them in return. The undeveloped masses of India have changed very little since the days of the Mutiny, but their ruler has changed greatly.

The Indian Civilian of to-day is less of an individual, and more of a cog in a machine. He is more in touch with headquarters, and has to dispense law instead of justice. For that not he but the Government is responsible. He has to spend his time writing interminable reports about his people instead of studying their ways. For that the Government before Lord Curzon's time was also responsible. As Macaulay said in his essay on Warren Hastings:—"It is from the letters and reports of a public man in India that the dispensers of patronage form their estimate of him." But for the final cause of getting out of touch with his district the district officer himself and the conditions of modern travel were answerable. In the Mutiny days the Civilian often lived and died in India, which was very unpleasant for

him but good for his work. Nowadays London is little more than a fortnight's journey from Bombay, and a man with three months' accumulated leave and sufficient money could run home for the grouse-shooting on the twelfth or any other festival that took his fancy. But when A. left for his three months' holiday B. had to be moved out of his district to fill A.'s place, and C. had to be moved to fill B.'s; and when A. came back again there was a fresh game of general post. Thus a man never remained in the same district long enough to know it thoroughly and to become known to the people.

Lord Curzon has changed all that. He has introduced a new rule that, after taking accumulated privileged leave of over six weeks, an officer shall render eighteen months' active service before his next holiday. His holidays are made longer and less frequent. Thus frequency of transfer is obviated. The district is benefited, but the officer is incommoded, and accordingly dislikes Lord Curzon.

The second change that Lord Curzon has made is in report-writing. "The real tyranny to be feared in India," he said, "is not tyranny by the executive authority but by the pen." Accordingly he issued an order that reports in future were only to call attention to the really salient features in the year's administration; and he imposed a maximum limit for each report, which was not to be exceeded without permission, while he abolished others entirely. This change was welcome to all the manlier men in the Service; but there were some "White Babus," especially in the upper ranks, with whom report-writing had become an ingrained habit, and who resented being turned into administrators instead of clerks in spite of themselves.

But these changes could only make the administration a little more efficient. They could could not make the country richer. That, unfortunately, is beyond the power of any Viceroy, however zealous. The prosperity of India

depends ultimately on the ratio of its resources to its population, and only immediately upon the clemency of the seasons. If a cycle of good harvests succeeds the cycle of droughts that India has recently experienced, the annual Budget may easily display a series of surpluses. But that is but an illusory and short-lived prosperity. The people will only increase and multiply up to the margin of safety, and so afford a plentiful harvest for the Reaper at the next famine. As the recent Famine Commission has pointed out, the only sources of permanent wealth are thrift and industry. As Lord Curzon points out, it is necessary for India to extend its non-agricultural sources of income, instead of depending entirely upon a single precarious industry. "It is for this reason that I welcome," he says, "the investment of capital and the employment of labour upon railways and canals, in factories, workshops, and mills, in coal mines and metalliferous mines, on tea and sugar and indigo plantations."

If India is ever to be genuinely prosperous it must restrict its population and extend its industries. But it will be more than one or two generations before that ideal comes to pass.

In the meantime the advice of the Famine Commission must not be taken too literally. It is one thing to restrict the increase of the population, and quite another thing to allow human life to perish that has already been born into the world. That is what the Native States have done during the past decade. The Census of 1901 shows that the total population of the Native States sank during that time by over 5 per cent. Lord Curzon said in one of his speeches that the last famine had exploded for ever the comparison in favour of Native States as against British districts. Similarly the terrible evidence of the Census must silence those critics who maintain that native would be better than British rule in India.

CHAPTER VIII

MISCELLANEOUS REFORMS

Six out of Lord Curzon's list of twelve reforms have now been treated, namely, frontier policy, the new frontier province, leave rules, report-writing, railways, and irrigation, and the remaining six may be more shortly summarised. The first of these was Currency Reform, which had been the despair of the Indian Exchequer and the Anglo-Indian family man for the past twenty years. But in 1899 the value of the rupee was fixed by law at 1s. 4d., or Rs. 15 to the £, and it has remained practically stable at that value ever since without causing the troubles in the gold circulation that were feared. The Indian accounts are now made out in sums of pounds sterling instead of that most perplexing symbol

Rs.; and the commercial evils of a fluctuating exchange have been obviated.

The question of the increasing indebtedness of the agricultural classes and the expropriation of their land to the money-lending classes is a pressing evil with which Lord Curzon has grappled. This tendency is largely a creation of British rule, and has its special drawbacks from the point of view of our interests. Before British law gave the money-lender absolute security for his debt he was not so eager to encourage the extravagance of the warrior and farming classes at their daughter's wedding and similar occasions. But now the moneylender is certain of his money or its equivalent, and he is only too anxious to become a landed proprietor. But the warrior and the peasant are the back-bone of British rule; and though, of course, we cannot permit the confidence of trade to be shaken, yet it was not to our interests to put the soft-fibred *bunniah* in possession of the land and create a discontented and dangerous class of ruined men.

This evil came to a head specially in the Punjab, and was first brought to light by Mr Thorburn in his book entitled *Mussalmans and Money-lenders.* The question was how to keep the peasant on the land without affecting the security of capital. This problem was faced in the Punjab Land Alienation Bill, which was passed into law in the autumn of 1900. By this measure the peasant was prevented from selling his land, except to another "agriculturalist," and so his credit was restricted. It is yet too early to pronounce on the success of the Bill; but if it is found to answer it is to be extended to Bombay and the other provinces in turn.

On the question of telegraphic communication between England and India, Lord Curzon said, in 1901, "The matter will not be satisfactorily or finally settled, and there will not be the maximum development of traffic between the two countries until the rate has been reduced to 1s. per word." At the time this sentence was uttered the rate was 4s. per word;

but during the same year, by giving a liberal guarantee from Indian funds, Lord Curzon induced the companies to reduce it to 2s. 6d. per word, and they have promised a further reduction to 2s. if the returns from traffic are found to justify it. This is a considerable boon to Indian commercial men; and Lord Curzon also aims at an "all-red line" to India, so that we may not be dependent on Foreign Powers, through whose territory the telegraph passes.

Lord Curzon takes a great interest in Indian art and architecture, and is an enthusiast for the preservation of archæological remains. In his speech to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, in February 1900, he said :—

"India is covered with the visible records of vanishing dynasties, of forgotten monarchs, of persecuted and sometimes dishonoured creeds. These monuments are for the most part, though there are notable exceptions, in British territory and on soil belonging to Government. Many of them are in out-of-the-way places, and are liable to the com-

bined ravages of a tropical climate, an exuberant flora, and very often a local and ignorant population, who see only in an ancient building the means of inexpensively raising a modern one for their own convenience. All these circumstances explain the peculiar responsibility that rests upon Government in India."

He went on to define his own purpose as follows:—

"I hope to assert more definitely during my time the Imperial responsibility of Government in respect of Indian antiquities, to inaugurate or to persuade a more liberal attitude on the part of those with whom it rests to provide the means, and to be a faithful guardian of the priceless treasure-house of art and learning that has, for a few years at any-rate, been committed to my charge."

The same speech contains the record of a number of separate instances in which Lord Curzon interfered on behalf of ancient monuments that were falling into decay or had been ruined by the British Philistine. But a single instance, which is not recorded there, must suffice as an example. At Ahmedabad there is an ancient mosque, of which

the windows are formed on a design probably unique in the world. On the wall of the mosque there is the outline of a tree springing from a single stem, and the interstices in its branches form the windows. When Lord Curzon visited Ahmedabad in the middle of the hot weather of 1900, on his Famine Tour, he found that all the graven work of this beautiful design had been used by the local *babus* to store old documents and papers. He immediately had all this rubbish thrown out, the tree-trunk railed off, and the artistic tracery restored to its original beauty. At the present Coronation Durbar, also, he is holding a great exhibition of Indian art for the purpose of reviving some of the perishing art industries of the country.

There remain two Commissions, one of which has recently issued its report, while the other is still sitting. The University Commission was appointed to try and discover a remedy for the special evils that have arisen from grafting a Western education upon an Eastern nation. Our educational policy in India was practically decided

by the great speech of Lord Macaulay, in which he pleaded for allowing our Indian fellow-subjects to enter into the heritage of Western Science through the gate of an English education. The advice was undoubtedly sound upon the whole, but experience has proved that it has its special evils. They are the same evils that we find in a less-exaggerated form in Ireland, where a Celtic race is taught on the basis of a Saxon tongue. But in India no more than in Ireland is any other course possible. The best Indian intellects are thus enabled to keep abreast of modern civilisation; but the mediocre and the stupid learn English lessons without understanding them, pass their examinations by the memory feat of learning their text-books by rote, and regard their graduate degree chiefly as a commercial asset which entitles them to Government employment. The evils of the cramming system in England are tenfold intensified in India. Even the man who has failed in his University examinations refuses to waste the money he has spent on learning

English, and proudly signs himself "failed B.A.," on the principle that it is better to have tried and lost than not to have been examined at all. It is doubtful whether these evils can be altogether remedied; but the University Commission has roused a storm of indignation amongst the students of Calcutta by recommending that the system of cram shall be prevented as much as possible, that the text-books shall be made too long to be learnt by heart, that the residential system of our English Universities shall be introduced as far as the poverty of the Indian student permits, and that steps shall be taken to increase the personal influence of the English teacher over his pupils. These are all desirable reforms, but difficult to carry into practice. During his final year of office Lord Curzon will have time to see some of them at any rate initiated.

The Indian police constable is probably one of the most corrupt individuals in the world. When free from European supervision he possesses all

the vices of the petty tyrant vested with a little brief authority. He is cruel and avaricious. Not only will he bear false witness and commit perjury himself for a bribe, but he will torture other witnesses to make them give the evidence he requires. A few years ago there was an able and zealous young English officer in the police force who discovered a wholesale system of bribery and extortion among his subordinates. He carefully collected all the necessary evidence and reported the case to the head of his department. In reply, instead of commendation for his zeal in the public service, he received a cold official notification that it was not desirable "to stir up mud." Those were the lines on which our Indian bureaucracy was managed before Lord Curzon took up the reins. It is to inquire into such evils as this that the Police Commission has been appointed; but it, like the Irrigation Commission, is still sitting.

Finally, there is the question of army reform, which is not on the list of the original dozen

subjects. At the farewell dinner to Sir Power Palmer, late Commander-in-Chief in India, Lord Curzon said of his work :—

"He may look back, as he retires, upon an Army almost entirely re-armed with a modern quick-firing rifle, supplied with a large increase of officers, equipped in respect of transport with a *bona-fide* organisation. He may contemplate a system of frontier defence, worked out upon a scientific plan and almost immeasurably superior to that of a few years ago, the mobilisation of coast defence, artillery re-armament, the Madras reconstruction, and the establishment of Indian factories for the supply of materials and munitions of war."

To these points may be added the details of the assistance lent by the Indian to the British Army during the Boer War and the China Campaign. It sent to South Africa 13,200 officers and men, and to China 1,300 British officers and men, with 20,000 Native troops and their Native

followers, and large supplies of ammunition, stores and baggage-animals. These were most valuable gifts at a crisis of the Empire's fortunes which have established a claim for considerate treatment of India in return.

CHAPTER IX

THE BEST VICEROY SINCE LORD LAWRENCE

Two of the titulary deities of the Punjab down to the present day are "Jân Lâren" and Nikalsayn, strong men both, of an iron hand and indomitable resolution. It is safe to prophesy that in the coming years the name of "Curzon Lat Sahib" will be added to theirs as one of the great Englishmen who have impressed the imagination of India. He has shown himself a ruler of high ideals and strenuous performance. Lord Curzon is not a popular Viceroy and it would be affectation to pretend that he is. It is not the strong man's part to court popularity, but to rule the Empire committed to his charge wisely and well, without fear or favour; and that Lord Curzon has done to the admiration of every unbiassed mind that has followed his career with attention.

He is not entirely liked by the Civil Service, because he has interfered with their facilities for obtaining leave, and because the reformer is never popular with those whom he sets out to reform. He himself has expressed his ambition as follows: —"I should like, if I have time while in India, to place upon the anvil every branch of Indian policy and administration, to test its efficiency and durability, and, if possible, do something for its improvement." To realise such an ambition meant a great stirring of the dry bones of the Indian bureaucracy, and dry bones have a strong objection to being stirred. He has even displayed a tendency to interfere with the rulings of the judges, which is an unforgivable sin on the part of an executive officer. But Lord Curzon regards himself as the fount of equity as well as the spring of action in India. He is not entirely liked by the Army, because he has curtailed their opportunities of distinction in frontier wars, and because here again he has displayed a tendency to interfere in regimental discipline. It was due

to his action that an officer was court-martialled for "a regrettable incident" in the Mahsud Waziri Campaign, though he was honourably acquitted. Nor is he entirely liked by the natives, because though his consideration for their welfare and his somewhat Oriental eloquence appeal to them, yet his Imperial sentiments identify him thoroughly with the dominant race. But though he is not a favourite with any one particular class, he is admired and respected by them all collectively. To every subject that has been laid before him during his term of office he has brought an open mind and an unfaltering judgment. Between the conflicting interests of European and native he holds the scales even with a stern and undeviating hand. It was he that was responsible for the punishment of some British soldiers at Rangoon who had murdered a native woman; and he disgraced the officers who showed a lack of zeal in investigating the matter. In the case of the 9th Lancers he has roused strong feeling by stopping

all leave in the regiment for six months, because a native was murdered near their lines on the night of their return from South Africa to Sialkot. He has revised the shooting rules in the Army in order to minimise the friction between the country people and what the native Press delights to call "a brutal and licentious soldiery." He has offended more than one Anglo-Indian Bumble by treating the natives as his constituents rather than as mere food for statistics. Finally, he has founded the Imperial Cadet Corps, in which he has already enrolled twenty scions of the ruling families of India, including four Ruling Chiefs. Thus he has provided a military career for the leaders of a warrior race who previously could aspire to no higher ambition than the idleness and intrigues of the zenana. The development of the Imperial Service troops, and their employment on active service both on the Indian border and in China, has been a marked feature of Lord Curzon's rule. All these points are separate manifestations of an excessive

activity, which, in the enervating climate of India, amid a stagnant society, is the most valuable fault that any Viceroy can have. In a word, Lord Curzon has won for himself in Indian matters much the same reputation as Lord Kitchener has in Army matters—that of a salutary nuisance.

His enemies say that Lord Curzon is an egotist. Perhaps he is. Most strong men with the courage of their convictions are somewhat self-centred and self-opinionated. But if so, this, like his activity of mind, is one of the best faults that an Indian Viceroy could have. The Oriental loves an autocrat; any symptom of hesitation or self-distrust is fatal—it only rouses distrust in him also. An assured command elicits unhesitating obedience. Lord Curzon has made the Government of India more direct and more personal. Moreover, his ambition is at any rate not selfish; it is wholly and solely directed to the welfare of India.

In Society, Lord Curzon is frankly and undisguisedly disliked. His *brusquerie* of manner is sometimes compared to his disadvantage with

the courtly suavity of Lord Dufferin. But look at the difference of calibre between the two men. Only a small-minded person would set his petty mannerisms against the good that Lord Curzon has done for India. Moreover, Society is more especially the woman's sphere, and there Lady Curzon atones for all that her husband lacks. The daughter of the Chicago millionaire, Mr Leiter, her beauty, wealth, and charm of manner have made her the most popular hostess that Simla has known for many a long day. America may be justly proud of having given such a Vice-Queen to the greatest dependency of the British Crown.

In person Lord Curzon is above the middle height, with the shoulders of an athlete, a curved nose, the alert eye of the business man, and somewhat the air of a fashionable physician. He is said to work fourteen hours a day, and his study light is seen burning far into the night. The Viceroy is certainly the busiest man in the Indian Empire. He demands from no man what he does not exact

from himself; and it needs an iron constitution to bear with such untiring energy the burden of responsibility that wore Lord Dalhousie prematurely into his grave.

On the intellectual side, Lord Curzon's chief defect is the lack of a sense of humour, not only in the sense of an appreciation of wit, but in the wider sense which implies balance and proportion of character. He is not the style of man to enjoy a joke at his own expense. Once at a book-tea in Simla he saw a lady with the legend pinned on her breast:—

"Lord and Lady Curzon."
"Lord and Lady Northcote."

He went up, asked the interpretation, and was told *American Wives and English Husbands*. All that he said in reply was, "Lady Northcote is a Canadian," and turned away in displeasure. But that is merely saying that Lord Curzon has the defects of his qualities. A sense of humour, while giving balance of mind and tolerance of judgment,

often means a lack of enthusiasm and driving power. No great prophet or reformer has ever had a sense of humour. Lord Curzon is at any rate a reformer, and he gives his whole soul to everything that he undertakes. He takes both himself and the Empire committed to his charge in deadly earnest. In fact, it is not too much to say that in ability, in insight and sympathy, and in versatility he has proved himself the best Viceroy that India has had since Lord Lawrence; perhaps we might go even further back and say since the Marquis of Wellesley.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

LORD CURZON'S JUSTIFICATION OF THE DELHI DURBAR

THE following is the complete text of the speech which Lord Curzon delivered in the Imperial Legislative Council at Simla on September 5, justifying the cost of the Delhi Coronation Durbar:—

"I desire to take advantage of the present occasion to say a few words about the great function, or combination of functions, at Delhi, which will fill so large a part of our attention during the next few months, and which will bring together so immense and probably unprecedented a concourse of the Indian peoples at the old Mogul

capital in January next. His Majesty the King has already been happily crowned in England, and he is as much already our King and Emperor as he was the day after the death of the late Queen Empress. No ceremony can increase his titles or add to the legality of his position. Why, then, it may be asked, should we have in India a celebration of his Coronation at all? Public opinion has, I think, already answered this question to its own satisfaction; but perhaps I may also be permitted to contribute a few words to the reply. To the East there is nothing strange, but something familiar and even sacred, in the practice that brings Sovereigns into communion with their people in a ceremony of public solemnity and rejoicing after they have succeeded to their high estate. Every Sovereign of India or of parts of India did it in the old days, every chief in India — the illustration may even be carried as far as the titled noblemen and zeminnars—does it now, and the Installation Durbar is an accepted and acceptable feature of ceremonial life from

one end of the country to the other. If this is so in all the grades of our social hierarchy, how much more important and desirable it is that it should obtain in the highest. I find, for my part, in such a ceremony much more than a mere official recognition of the fact that one monarch has died and another succeeded. To millions of the people in their remote and contracted lives that makes but little difference; but the community of interest between a Sovereign and his people to which such a function testifies, and which it serves to keep alive, is most vital and most important. Society in all ages has sought a head to whom it has been prepared to pay reverence, and Kingship is the popular form that has been assumed by its almost universal instinct. But it is in proportion as the superiority thus willingly acknowledged by the subject ceases to be merely official and titular, and as the King becomes the representative as well as the figure-head of his people, that the relationship is of value to both of them. The life and vigour of a nation are summed up before the world in the

person of its Sovereign. He it is who symbolises its unity and speaks for it in the gate. Here in India it is for the first time under the British Crown that this unity has been attained and that the entire Continent has acknowledged a single ruler. The political force and the moral grandeur of the nation are indisputably increased by this form of cohesion, and both are raised in the estimation of the world by a demonstration of its reality.

"There is another point of view from which I regard such a display as having far more than a superficial value. In all our various divisions in this country, divisions of race and class and custom and creed, the one thing that holds us together and subordinates the things that make for separation to the compelling force of union, is loyalty to a common Head, membership of the same body politic, fellow-citizenship of the same Empire. The more we realise this, the happier will be our individual lives, and the more assured our national destinies. It is, therefore, as an act

of supreme public solemnity, demonstrating to ourselves our strength, that I regard the Delhi ceremonial, and certainly as no mere pageant intended to dazzle the senses for a few hours or days, and then to be forgotten. To my mind, Lord Lytton, who was the first in British times to inaugurate such an Imperial Durbar as we propose to hold, though in different circumstances and on a smaller scale, set an example characterised both by statesmanship and imagination. I have not a doubt that much good flowed from the Imperial Assemblage of 1st January 1877, and, under the blessing of Providence, I firmly believe that similar and even larger results will follow from the ceremony of the 1st January 1903.

"Of course the occasion would be made both more solemn and more historic if the King-Emperor were able to be present in person, and could place the Crown of All the Indias upon his own brow. Long ago, when we were first formulating our plans, I ventured to present this aspect of the case to His Majesty. The idea was most

agreeable to him, and he would have greatly rejoiced to be able to carry it out. His love for this country has always been great, and I venture to affirm that he is as proud to be the first Emperor of All India as the late Queen Victoria was to be its first Empress; but the duties of State are too absorbing to permit His Majesty to be absent from England for so many weeks as would have been required, and he was compelled to desist from gratifying a wish that would otherwise have had for him the greatest attractions. In these circumstances the news will be received with delight that His Majesty has deputed his brother, the Duke of Connaught, to represent the Royal Family at the approaching Durbar. The presence of the Duke and Duchess, who have already spent so many happy years in this country, and who are so universally loved by all classes of the people, will lend to our proceedings a distinction that they would otherwise have lacked, and will bring home more directly to all India the vivid personal interest of the Sovereign. We shall feel

that the King is in a certain sense with us in the person of his brother, and that, as it was not in his power either to attend himself or to depute the heir-apparent, whom we all hope to welcome at a later date, His Majesty has taken the best means of testifying to India his profound sympathy and regard.

"There is another point of view from which I think that such a gathering as that which will take place at Delhi will be of value. The weak spot of India is what I may call its water-tight compartment system. Each province, each native state, is more or less shut off by solid bulkheads even from its neighbour. The spread of railways and the relaxation of social restrictions are tending to break these down; but they are still very strong. Princes who live in the south have rarely, if ever in their lives, seen or visited the states of the north. Perhaps among the latter there are chiefs who have rarely left their homes. It cannot but be a good thing that they should meet and get to know each other, and exchange

ideas, and yet no opportunity of meeting on a large scale is possible, unless it be afforded by a state occasion such as this. If we look at the continent of Europe we shall see what immense strides have been made in the development of common interests and in the cause of peace since the European rulers have taken to meeting each other on important occasions. Where they used in the old days to set their armies in motion upon the slightest breath of suspicion, they now have a talk, and exchange toasts at official banquets. Greece did the same thing in ancient times, and in a way peculiar to herself, for it cannot be doubted that the national spirit which held all those little states together, and enabled them to stand up against the greatest military empires of the old world, was largely bred and nurtured at the Pan-Hellenic gatherings known as the Olympic Games.

"Again, in this country, I think that it is an equal benefit to the British administrators from different provinces to meet. There is many a man

in Madras who has never seen the Punjab, or even in Bombay who is wholly ignorant of Bengal. The Viceroy is almost the only man in India who has the chance of knowing the whole country and of applying the comparative test. People are apt to complain of uniformity in government. I can assure them that the differentiations of system and plan in India are amazing. I am not the person to wish to blot them out; but I do say confidently that an occasion like the Delhi Durbar, when soldiers and civilians from all parts of India will meet, not for a few hours or a day, but for a fortnight, and can compare notes and exchange ideas with each other, will be fraught with incalculable advantage, both to the participants and to the administration which they serve.

"These appear to me, apart from the act of homage to the Sovereign, to be the principal benefits that will accrue to India as a whole from the Durbar. I have, as is known, endeavoured still further to utilise the opportunity in a practical spirit, by arranging for a great Exhibi-

tion of Indian art manufactures to be held at Delhi at the same time. I confidently assure the public that they will be greatly astonished at the range, the variety, and the beauty of this Exhibition. Whether it is true that the old Indian arts are being killed by European competition, a charge that is frequently brought by those who do not make the smallest effort to keep them alive themselves, or whether they are perishing from this apathy, or whether India merely provides, as I suspect, an illustration of a world-wide law, the fact remains that the process of extinction has not been carried nearly so far as many suppose, and that artificers still exist in India, even in these days of commercial ideals and debauched taste, who are capable of satisfying the demand for the artistic and beautiful and rare, if such a demand there be. I cannot pretend by a single exhibition to create it; but if it already be in existence, as I cannot but think, though perhaps dormant and abashed, then we may do a good deal by an opportunity such as

this to revive and stimulate it, for we shall, I hope, both advertise to the world what we are capable of turning out and also—which is much more important — encourage the aptitudes and educate the taste of our own people.

"And now I wish to say a few words about an even more practical aspect of the case, viz., the charge that will thereby be imposed upon the revenues of India. I have seen statements made about this subject that have startled even my hardened mind. It seems to be quite a popular thing to allege in certain quarters that the Durbar is going to cost India at least a crore, while in one responsible organ I read that Lord Curzon was going to throw away upon senseless pomp and show a sum of two millions sterling. Of course, too, our old friend Nero, who is alleged to have fiddled while Rome burned, has often been brought out for my special delectation. Personally I deprecate the tendency to apply to every act of State, great or small, the sordid test of its actual equivalent in pice and annas and rupees.

There are some things for which no expenditure can be too great, just as there are others for which none can be too small; but I quite recognise that these abstract considerations will not appeal to everybody and that there is both seriousness and sincerity in the contention that, desirable and even necessary as the function may be, the public money should not be needlessly squandered upon it. This plea seems to me to be so reasonable that I propose to give to it the answer that it deserves. It emanates, I think, from two classes of persons —from those who think that no money ought to be spent at Delhi at all while parts of India are suffering from drought or scarcity, and from those who are anxious that while some money is spent it should not be too much. I will deal with the first class first. A few weeks ago it is true that we were in the greatest anxiety and trepidation as to what might be in store for us in Gujrat, in parts of the Deccan, in Ajmer, and in portions of the Central Provinces and the Punjab; but I can truthfully say that the past three weeks

have been, on the whole, the happiest that I have spent since I came to India, for, by the merciful and continuous fall of rain in those tracts where it was most needed, we have, I believe, escaped all chance of real or wide-spread famine in the forthcoming winter, and though here and there we may be confronted with distress, yet nothing in the shape of a national calamity is to be feared. But even supposing that this rain had not fallen or that I am all wrong in my prognostications now, does anyone suppose for a moment that, because we are going to expend a certain number of lakhs of rupees at Delhi, one penny less would have been devoted to the relief and sustenance of the destitute in other parts of India? At the beginning of the famine of 1899 I gave the assurance on behalf of Government that not one rupee would be stinted or spared that could be devoted to the alleviation of distress and the saving of human life. That promise we faithfully fulfil, and even if famine burst upon us now or while the Durbar was proceeding, we

should not take from the public purse a single anna that would otherwise be consecrated to the service of the poor. They have the first claim upon our consideration and that claim we should regard it as an obligation of honour to discharge.

"Then there is the second class of critics who recognise that the Durbar must cost something, but are apprehensive lest it should be run on too exorbitant a scale. I am old enough to remember that the same criticism was rife at the time of Lord Lytton's assemblage in the autumn of 1876. Famine was at that time abroad in the land, and loud were the denunciations both in the Indian press, and even in Parliament at home, of his alleged extravagance and folly, and yet I have seen calculations made by Lord Lytton which show that when all recoveries had been made the net cost to India of the Delhi assemblage was only £50,000 and of the entire rejoicings throughout India, Delhi included, £100,000. In one respect we are in a somewhat different position now. The assemblage of 1877 was an almost

exclusively official assemblage. I have tried to gather at the impending Durbar representatives of all the leading classes of the community from every part of India. I want to make it a celebration not of officials alone but of the public. This means that we shall have at Delhi in the forthcoming winter larger camps, more guests, and as a consequence a greater outlay than in 1877. Quite apart from our own arrangements, the improvement in communications and the social progress that have taken place in the last twenty-five years will bring together a much larger concourse of persons. Nearly everyone would like to be present, and the number who will actually be present will be very large. All these features will tend to increase the scale of the proceedings. Notwithstanding these considerations I desire to assure the public, who have a right to know, that the proposed arrangements are being run on strictly business-like and economical lines. I remember hearing Lord Salisbury, in a speech at the Mansion House,

before I left England, eulogise our future Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, for his ability to run a campaign on commercial principles. I think that in respect of the Durbar we may lay a similar flattering unction to our souls. The whole of the buildings and structures at Delhi that are being erected for the special purposes of the gathering are being made of materials that will retain their value after their preliminary use, and will be offered for public sale. In many cases recoveries of from sixty to eighty per cent of the initial outlay are thus expected. The tents and carriages and horses which have had to be made or collected in such enormous numbers for the convenience of visitors will be similarly disposed of, and here, in many cases, I expect that we shall retrieve 100 per cent of the value. The entire electric plant for lighting the camps and the Fort is part of the machinery that has been ordered by the Military Department for instituting the great experiment of ventilating and lighting barracks in India by

electricity. Down to the smallest detail we are so arranging that the money will not be thrown away, but in some form or other will come back. Then I take Government property in railways in this country, and whether we work them ourselves or through others, the whole, or a considerable portion of the profits come into our hands. I think that the critics may be invited to pause and wait to see the traffic receipts of December, January and February next before they continue their lamentations. I shall be very much surprised if these returns do not put back into the pocket of Government the major portion of what it has spent. There are also the postal and telegraphic services, the profits of which pass into the Government chest and from which we shall receive largely-increased returns. Finally, I would invite those who are so fearful of an unremunerative outlay to open their eyes to what is going on and has been going on for months past in all parts of India. I assert that hundreds of thousands of

Indian workmen and artisans are receiving full employment and good wages in preparing for this Durbar. Go to the cotton mills of Cawnpore and Jubbulpore and Lahore, where the tents are made, to the factories where the harness and saddlery are turned out, to the carriage-builders where the landaus and victorias are being built by the hundred, to the carpet factories where the *durries* and rugs are being woven, to the furniture-makers where the camp equipage is manufactured; go to every Native State where the *durzis* and embroiderers will be found working double time; go to any town or even village in India where a native art industry exists and has perhaps hitherto languished, but where you will find the coppersmiths and silversmiths, the carvers in wood and ivory and stone, the enamellers and painters and lacquerers, hard at work; go to all these places and then form an opinion as to the effect upon Indian labour of the Delhi Durbar. Supposing we were to follow the advice of some of our friends and to issue

a proclamation suspending the entire proceedings to-morrow, I predict that a cry of protest and of appeal would be heard from one end of the country to the other, and that without benefiting a single individual we should deprive the Indian artisan of one of the greatest opportunities that he has enjoyed for generations and inflict upon him a cruel and senseless injury.

"I have thus argued that a large portion of the expenditure to be incurred at Delhi will be nominal only, and that we shall take back or give back to India with one hand what we expend with the other. Let me deal with the actual figures in the Budget of last March. We provided for an outlay of twenty-six and a half lakhs (about £176,000) upon the Durbar. This is the sum that in the fertile imagination of some writers has been magnified to one crore and even to two millions sterling. I do not include in this outlay the sum of four lakhs which have been devoted to the Arts Exhibition, because I do not

suppose that anyone will be found to argue that that is an expenditure of public money upon the Coronation. The greater part of it will be recovered, and in any year, Coronation or otherwise, it would have been a prudent and remunerative expenditure of the public money. Neither do I take the eight and a half lakhs provided for the troops, for we should not of course have expended that sum in bringing so large a number of troops to Delhi for the Durbar alone. It is being expended in the main upon the great military manœuvres that are an inseparable feature of modern military training and that will take place during the month preceeding the Durbar, in the same way as the manœuvres held by Lord Dufferin in the same neighbourhood, independently either of Durbar or of Coronation, in the year 1886. There remain then twenty-six and a half lakhs, supplemented by such local expenditure as may be imposed upon Local Governments by their preparations, and of the total sum, as I have pointed out, the greater part will most certainly be

reimbursed. The actual net cost of the proceedings at Delhi it is of course impossible at this date to calculate or forecast; but I hope I have said enough to show that it will be almost immeasurably less than the dimensions which a too tropical imagination has allowed it to assume, and that a great State ceremonial will never have been conducted in India upon more economical lines.

"I cannot help thinking that the sensitiveness about expenditure here, which I hope that I may have succeeded in allaying, has been to some extent fomented by the impression that prevailed till a little while ago that India might also be called upon to pay for a portion of the entertainment of the Indian visitors and the military contingent who recently proceeded to England to take part in the Coronation festivities there. This was a subject upon which the Government of India placed themselves some time ago in communication with the Home Government, and as a sequel to this exchange of opinion it was with pleasure that we

heard that the Secretary of State had persuaded the Imperial Exchequer to assume the entire cost of all charges that had been incurred in England in connection with the Indian visitors. These include the entertainment of the Indian Chiefs and representatives, and of the Contingent representing the army and volunteers, as well as the entire cost of the India Office ceremony. The principle that each country should pay for its own guests is in my opinion incontestably right, and it will, I hope, be accepted and acted upon in the future.

"I have now said enough, I hope, to show that neither is Rome burning—on the contrary, I believe that she stands on the threshold of an era of great prosperity—nor most certainly is Nero fiddling. I do not indulge much in prophecy in India, and I cannot say what unforeseen vicissitudes, internal or external, may be in store for us; but, humanly speaking, we need not anticipate anything that is likely during the few months that intervene between now and January next to

prevent us from joining in the Delhi gathering with clear consciences and joyous hearts. It only now remains for us to endeavour to make our celebration in India not less successful than that which has just been carried through in England. A good many eyes in a good many parts of the globe will be directed upon Delhi in January next, and we shall have an opportunity not merely of testifying the enthusiastic loyalty of India to the King-Emperor in the presence of his brother, but also of demonstrating to the world that India is not sunk in torpor or stagnation, but is alive with an ever-expanding force and energy. That all India should approach these ceremonies with one heart and mind and voice is my most earnest prayer, and that those who cannot take part in them at Delhi should hold similar rejoicings, and be similarly entertained in the neighbourhood of their own homes, it is our hope and desire to arrange.

"There is one small matter personal to myself which I may perhaps be allowed to mention before

I conclude, because it also has a wider bearing. I have seen it assumed in many quarters that as soon as the Durbar is over and this anxiety has been removed, I am likely to resign my office and go to England in the pursuit of personal or political ambitions. Indeed, I scarcely know how many times during the past two years similar stories have been flying about. Both the authors of these rumours and those who give credit to them do me an unconscious injustice in assuming that I could think of taking my hand off the plough before the end of the furrow is in sight. Not once since I have been in India has any such idea entered my mind. Barring contingencies that cannot be foreseen, I have no intention whatever of so acting. Much of the work to which my colleagues and myself have set our hands is still incomplete. So long as I receive from them an assistance which has never swerved or abated, and so long as health and strength are given to me to pursue the task, I shall regard it as an abnegation of duty to lay it down. Whether the work be worth doing for

the sake of the country it is not for me to say, but I may be permitted to add that to me at anyrate it appears as the highest and most sacred of trusts."

THE END

EDINBURGH
COLSTON AND COY. LIMITED
PRINTERS

(HTPD)

00022879

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018